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# RUSSIAN REVIEW



*An American Journal  
Devoted to Russia  
Past and Present*

*Autumn  
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# THE RUSSIAN REVIEW

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# Seichas:

## A Comparison of Pre-Reform Russia and the Ante-Bellum South\*

By ROGER DOW

DURING the American Civil War the sympathies of Russia, and to some extent Russian assistance, lay with the North and not with the South. Yet had Russia been less influenced by European politics and more by similar institutions and a similar culture, she would have turned to the Confederacy. Both had agrarian economies based on bond labor, both were still essentially eighteenth century in ideas and culture in a world dominated by nineteenth century Britain and France.

In the institution of bond labor the two peoples came closest together, yet neither of them realized how much alike the two systems were. When similarity was noted at all it was ordinarily by someone like little Bunny Wrangel who, with childish simplicity, saw the thing whole and saw it true. Her brother, Baron Nicholas Wrangel, has told in his memoirs<sup>1</sup> how their parents and the old nurse explained with horrified emphasis just how terrible slavery was in contrast with the benevolent Russian system where a serf could not be beaten to death or separated from his family and sold like any other piece of merchandise. In America white slavery was held in such horror that the term has become attached to the most repulsive kind of bondage that Americans can imagine. Yet save for color there was little difference at all.

The evils of both systems were brought to the attention of the world almost simultaneously, with the publication in 1852 of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Turgenev's *Sportsman's Sketches*. The two books created a sensation everywhere. Mrs. Stowe's work created more of a sensation than Turgenev's, however, even in Russia, where it was published in translation within a year.

The Russians soon became as well aware as William Lloyd Garri-

\*This article is based on material collected by the author and Alexandre Tarsaidzé for a book on Russian-American relations, and the author is indebted to his collaborator and friend for permission to use some of the matter here.

<sup>1</sup>Baron Nicholas Wrangel, *Memoirs*, London, 1927.

son that a slave might be beaten or tortured to death, and those who suffered vicarious agonies with Uncle Tom assumed from its possibility its probability and wide-spread observance. They overlooked the cold statistical fact that of the four slave-owners depicted by Mrs. Stowe three were generous to their slaves to the point of bankruptcy, but it would hardly be fair to chide the Russians for this oversight. Americans did not notice it either, nor have they been more observant of the Russian scene. With a weird disregard for chronology they accepted Russian barbarism and mediaevalism as an indisputable fact because serfdom persisted there until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Legally there was indeed a vast difference between serfdom and slavery, but in practice the points stressed were of no great importance. In Russia the protective statutes were unenforced and had been for decades; by the reign of Catherine II any real distinction between serf and slave had been lost or obscured. In America the laws were harsh, but common-sense and ordinary humanity had so modified them that, practically, they did not differ from those in Russia. American law regarding slavery pretty generally rested on the maxim: "A slave has no rights that a white man is bound to respect,"<sup>2</sup> whereas a Russian jurist summarized the Russian situation as: "The serf has no property rights which can be effectively defended against his master."<sup>3</sup> The phrasing is different, but the results were the same.

From the days of Paul I, the Russian landlord could not legally exact more than three days of labor from his serf in one week, of which Sunday could not be one, but there was no redress for the peasant if the landlord chose to ignore the law. Peasant rights were protected in a number of statutes, but they were all nullified by the one forbidding him to lodge any complaint against his master. This strange regulation originally meant no *unjust* complaint, which was extraordinary enough, since it is usually assumed that the court and not the plaintiff decides on the justice of a charge, but by an extension, not altogether illogical, it was interpreted as meaning any complaint, whether just or unjust. It was not until 1858, three years before the Liberation, that the Minister of the Interior ordered the courts to distinguish between just and unjust complaints.

<sup>2</sup>This statement was published in *The Independent* as Chief Justice Taney's observation in the Dred Scott case. He did not say it, but it immediately became an Abolitionist cry and is still widely quoted—because it was essentially true.

<sup>3</sup>G. T. Robinson, *Rural Russia Under the Old Régime*, N. Y., 1932, p. 42, quoting I. I. Ignatovich, *Pomeshchiki i krest'yane nakanune osvobodzheniya*, Leningrad, 1925, p. 50.

While a master could not sentence his serf to death, he could send him to Siberia for life or order him flogged, a punishment as lethal for a Russian as for an Uncle Tom. The provision against selling serfs apart from the land was almost always inoperative. Mackenzie Wallace cites several advertisements that appeared in the *Moskovskie Vedomosti* in 1801. A typical advertisement ran:

*To be sold:* 3 coachmen, well-trained and handsome; 2 girls, 18 and 15, good-looking and well-acquainted with handiwork; 2 hairdressers (male), one 21 years old.<sup>4</sup>

In 1822 a law was promulgated forbidding the advertisement of a serf for sale, the best proof of the prevalence of the custom. This law was evaded as easily as its predecessors, at first by the legal fiction that the sale was merely a hiring out; but the hire might be for an indefinite period or for as much as 50 or 75 years and the master was paid for the serf's services in a lump sum, so it amounted to a sale. One landlord made a lucrative practice of purchasing orphaned serfs to raise for the open market, and the amusing activities of Chichikov in Gogol's *Dead Souls* show that the practice of selling their peasants was widespread among the landlord class. Chichikov encountered difficulty only because he was trying to buy dead serfs instead of live ones. The fiction of "hiring" was not even adhered to for very long, for right down to the emancipation serfs were publicly sold without land—not hired, even for an indefinite period—at the great Nizhni-Novgorod Fair, and the auction bore no noticeable difference from those of Charleston or New Orleans.

The law forbidding peasants to complain was not really important, since their complaints went through a manorial court presided over by their own or a neighboring landlord. Many peasants complained in spite of the law, of course, but it did them no good. While there are no figures on either side, it is quite likely that since human nature is much the same everywhere there were, proportionately, as many Russian serfs killed by punishment as slaves on Southern plantations. Readers of *The Brothers Karamazov* will recall the horrible story of the serf-child torn to pieces by hounds because his master saw him throw a stone at them—though this may well have been a stock situation in Russian fiction and, in any case, Dostoevsky was a metropolitan and had no personal knowledge of serfdom or country life.

There were sound economic motives for not killing serfs or slaves. The maiming of a creature worth eight hundred or a thousand dollars

<sup>4</sup>D. Mackenzie Wallace, *Russia*, N. Y., 1877, p. 107.

was too expensive for most people. There was another economic deterrent, also, excellently summarized by Nikander Strelsky in his account of a particular killing in a novel by Saltykov-Shchedrin:

The killing of a serf was a serious matter. The District Chief of Police conducted an investigation before a number of court officers, all of whom spent weeks at their task, sheltered and fed at the squire's expense. The cost of this, plus many bribes, ate up half his capital. The verdict of the inquest was that Ulita's death resulted from apoplexy. The decree became a scandal, and the authorities sent a magistrate from the chief provincial town to conduct a second inquiry. A sort of autopsy was held on the already decomposed body, which "confirmed" the previous verdict. . . . This whitewashing absorbed the remainder of the guilty man's capital, and he was forced to mortgage both his own and his wife's small estates.<sup>5</sup>

This still did not end the matter. The case was appealed, and when it finally reached the St. Petersburg courts four or five years later, both verdicts were reversed and the squire was exiled to a remote part of the empire.

While the murder of a serf or a slave was expensive and excessive cruelty unusual, they nevertheless occurred in both countries, and it is the unusual that gives the tone to an institution—not what customarily happens, but what can and does occasionally happen. Charles Dickens made a cogent case against slavery when he pointed out in his *American Notes* that the institution was "not a whit the more endurable because some hearts are to be found which can partially resist its hardening influences." The argument that brutality was "against the interests" of the owners did not move him. Men are led to ruin along many roads that are obviously "against their interests"—crime, debauchery, drunkenness, murder—"because such inclinations are among the vicious qualities of mankind," and "brutal lust, cruelty and the abuse of irresponsible power" will always lead to such horrors if permitted.<sup>6</sup>

Naturally, the South had no law limiting the days of work, since the status of a slave made him a chattel as much as a horse or a cow, and except in Louisiana no slave had the right to any property, personal or otherwise. Negroes were forbidden to assemble unless a white man was present—a group of Negroes gathered for the purpose of hanging their master to a sour-apple tree would, presumably, be technically legal—and they were strictly enjoined from walking the roads by night, or in groups by day, unless carrying written per-

<sup>5</sup>Nikander Strelsky, *Saltykov and the Russian Squire*, N. Y., 1940, pp. 120-121.

<sup>6</sup>Charles Dickens, *American Notes*, ch. xvii.

mission from their masters or accompanied by a white man. All must be in by curfew, and the owners were forbidden to teach them even the rudiments of education. No contract made by a slave was legal without the consent of his master; he could not testify against a white person whether in his own or any other cause, precisely as a Russian serf could not file a complaint; and he could own no weapons. He was forbidden on pain of the strictest penalties from striking a white person under any circumstances.

While the laws varied among the states from the most repressive along the Atlantic seaboard to the most lenient in Louisiana's *Code Noir*, they had the same fundamental provisions, and it will be seen at once that, despite differences from Russian legislation, they paralleled Russian practice in all essential details. In the matter of education, for example, scores of slaves were taught reading and writing by their masters or mistresses, the most famous being the unfruitful attempt to educate Topsy.

Masters often did give their slaves some sort of written document when they were sent to a distant place or on a lengthy errand, but it was not always done, and it was rare indeed for it to be demanded except in times of unusual excitement such as the search for a fugitive or during a slave rebellion. At such times as the latter nothing could have forced the average Negro to travel the roads, passport or no passport. No law in Russia required serfs specifically to carry such a passport, for every one was required to do so whatever his social position.

The restrictions on assembly or daylight travel were dead letters from the beginning. Hundreds of slaves went placidly about their work every day, going alone, or in groups accompanied only by a Negro foreman, from their cabins to outlying fields and back again without any worry over the law. On Sundays they assembled in church, where every person from the preacher to the most unrepentant sinner was as black as night.

The *Code Noir* in Louisiana emphatically forbade the removal by sale of young children from their mothers, and the relative paucity of slave traders along the lower Mississippi permitted the authorities to enforce it without great difficulty. Elsewhere there was no such law, and no restraints were placed on the sale of his property by a master in any way he chose, whether through necessity or caprice. This has evoked the most harrowing pictures in American literature, of a mother bereft of her child, a wife and husband cruelly separated, or whole families split into many parts and sent to far sections of the



country. But despite the pathetic images, the actual situation was far different. Common humanity aside, there were excellent social and economic reasons why no planter, unless beset by the direct emergency, would separate a family of his people. It would cause so much demoralization among the other slaves that work could be continued only with the greatest difficulty. Enlightened self-interest forced the planters to exercise caution in selling even one slave, or the whole domestic system might be dislocated. Sales were necessary for a number of reasons, and were often accompanied by sorrow and heartbreak, but it was ordinarily through no fault of the master.

Obviously wives or husbands could not be found for all the slaves on the same plantation unless it was one of great size, for, contrary to romantic notions, the Southern planter counted his slaves in tens rather than in hundreds or thousands. The wealthiest planter in America in 1835 was Wade Hampton with 300 slaves, a small number indeed when compared with the 300,000 owned in 1860 by Count Sheremetiev, or even with the many Russian landlords who owned at least 10,000 souls. Since the planters were scrupulous about inbreeding, the slave usually had to marry "outside," but an earnest effort was made to buy the other partner or to sell the one already held, so that the couple might be united.

In general, however, slavery worked moderately well in the South, where the Russian legal situation was exactly reversed—instead of protective legislation largely ignored in practice, there were harsh laws mitigated considerably by custom.

The difference in race was one of the major factors that prevented the slave rebellions in America that were almost endemic in Russia for more than two centuries before the Liberation. The number of free Negroes was very small in the United States, where the great mass of small farmers and peasants were white and already possessed of violent feelings about Negroes. Furthermore, the number of slaves was very small relative to the total population, and among the slaves the household servants were usually if not always on the side of their masters. Such risings as the South experienced were spontaneous and short-lived.<sup>7</sup>

In Russia, as Geroid Robinson has pointed out, serf revolts were frequent and important, owing in large part to the ease with which all discontented elements could be welded together into one strong

<sup>7</sup>There were only about four of any importance: the Stono rising of 1739, the Gabriel revolt in 1800, the Denmark Vesey plot of 1822 and, worst and most frightening of all, the Nat Turner massacre in Southampton, Virginia, in 1828.



opposition. There was no racial bar, the social bar was less obvious where it existed at all, there were many common political aims, there were a great many more possible participants in revolts, and there was excellent leadership, either from the more enlightened serfs or from Cossacks. In America the only real attempt to raise the slaves in a political rebellion was John Brown's, at Harper's Ferry, not to be compared for a minute with the rebellions in Russia led by Bolotnikov, Stenka Razin, or Pugachov. Far from revolting, the slaves even continued to work the fields during the Civil War to provide food and clothing for the Confederate Army. Thurlow Weed wrote John Bigelow in 1863 that the Negroes in the South showed no inclination to be free, and those in the North none to fight. There had been a great deal of argument *pro* and *contra* over the use of Negro troops—and in the end the Negroes showed no interest whatever in volunteering.<sup>8</sup> And drafting the Negro to fight for freedom for others was a *reductio* that did not escape those whites in the North who were opposed to the war on other grounds.

In Russia, on the other hand, the military were employed on 228 occasions between 1826 and 1854—less than thirty years—to suppress peasant disorders.<sup>9</sup> During the Crimean War, when troops were desperately needed at the front, many divisions were kept at home to protect property.

Russia developed a class of rich serf that the South never had, a result in part of the racial identity of master and serf, and in part of the use of serfs in industry. In some cases, particularly that of textiles, industries were largely developed by serfs; the cotton industry, for example, and the silk works at Ivanovo produced several very wealthy serfs. The first concern of all of them was, naturally, to purchase their freedom, but in many cases the owners refused to sell and secured instead an enormous *obrok* for allowing the serfs to continue making money. The bulk of the serf's fortune was protected by laws that a wealthy man could invoke with more assurance than a poor one could.

Russia's early factories were manned and its railways were built largely with serf labor, and a margin of profit remained to the laborer after paying an *obrok* to his master. In America there was relatively little of this, for the slave was kept to agricultural pursuits and not allowed to enter industrial activities to any great extent. In the building of railroads and the digging of canals immigrant Irish were

<sup>8</sup>John Bigelow, *Retrospections of an Active Life*, N. Y., 1909-13, I, 609.

<sup>9</sup>Robinson, *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

chiefly used. One wealthy slave-owner was amazed when a Northern tourist asked him why he hired Irish to dig channels and construct a levee along the river front of his Mississippi plantation, when he had slaves he could not keep busy. "Use my slaves in such dangerous work!" he replied in amazement. "Why they might be killed, and I would be out a thousand dollars apiece. The Irish don't cost anything except their wages."

A society that was largely rural and based on bond labor had a cultural cast very different from that of the metropolitan societies developing in England, France, and the northern United States based on commerce and industry. There was in the former more leisure for the cultivation of the arts, and a greater interest in them. This amateur activity often made for inferiority to the professional art practised in Western Europe and in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, but it also made for more widespread interest, essentially an eighteenth century attitude not yet superseded. La Rochefoucauld said that he found in the South "a taste for reading more prevalent among gentlemen of the first class than in any other part of America," and one need only read Turgenev to see that the same might apply as well to Russian "gentlemen of the first class" in contrast with other Europeans.

Music was the only art that appears to have been generally comparable with the professional level attained elsewhere. In Russia and the old South the music often had a peculiarly tragic quality deriving from its origin among people in bondage. The sombre qualities in the music of Moussorgsky and Chaikovsky came less from the "Russian soul" than from the folksongs of the serfs on which they were often based, qualities to be found also in the great Negro spirituals and in the ballads of the same genre by Stephen Foster, James Bland, and the countless makers of songs who have left no other records of their existence. Russian music has no songs of greater sadness than "Massa's in the Cold, Cold Ground," or "Nellie Gray," or the great chants of bondage like "Deep River" and "Goin' Home." There have been many attempts to weave such melodies into ambitious compositions, the most successful probably being Gershwin's *Porgy* and Dvorak's *New World Symphony*, in which he caught in the largo movement the tragic dignity of the slave's life as no American has yet been able to do, but as the Russian masters of music succeeded in doing frequently.

Since the Russian dispersion, the world has grown familiar with

the magnificent *a capella* singing of the Kedroff Quartet and of Serge Jaroff's Don Cossack Chorus, so beloved a part of the old life. But, however new it may have been to the rest of the world, it had long been familiar to Americans who knew the rich harmonies of groups like the Fiske Jubilee Singers.

Russian music was not all sombre, of course, just as Russians were not all serfs. The Cossack *trepak* and the numerous sword dances of the Caucasus were as gay and rollicking as "Turkey in the Straw" or "Old Dan Tucker." They were played and sung by people who had escaped serfdom by fleeing to the southern and eastern frontiers—"beyond the rapids" or to the wild Caucasus—like the Southerners who pushed out to the Indian country or up into the mountain fastnesses of Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Ozarks. The Russian played on the balalaika and the American on the banjo, but the songs themselves were much alike in mood.

In other forms, and notably in Romantic literature, similarities almost as striking can be found. The Romantic movement was worldwide in its scope, but it was in Russia and the old South that it had its most significant influence. The writers of the period were deeply suffused with Byronic sorrow; both lands were filled with sad young men yearning to fight and bleed in a noble cause. At its best the result was great literature, the masterpieces of Pushkin, Lermontov, and Edgar Allan Poe. At its worst, it resulted in the lugubrious poems of Emmeline Grangerford, which Huck Finn found so moving.

Byron's influence was chiefly among the *illuminati*, but another member of the Romantic school pervaded all classes, for if one could read, one read Sir Walter Scott in preference to any other. He was the favorite author of Nicholas I, and the best read man in America. Mark Twain, who hated the cloak and sword school, held that "admiration of his fantastic heroes and their 'chivalry' doings and romantic juvenilities"<sup>10</sup> had been the most baneful influence in the South. "Give me the wholesome smell of cotton factories and locomotives!" he said disgustedly.

Gracious living meant not only the cultivation of the mind but the cultivation of manners as well. Mark Twain noted the same innate courtesy among Russians that he found among the planter class. "The French are polite," he wrote in *Innocents Abroad*, "but it is often mere ceremonious politeness. A Russian imbues his polite things with a heartiness, both of phrase and expression, that compels belief in their sincerity." Mark Twain was understood and loved in

<sup>10</sup>Samuel L. Clemens, *Life on the Mississippi*, Harper ed. p. 333.

Russia as nowhere else in the world outside his own land, for descriptions and currents that would mean little even to a New Englander struck a familiar chord in the heart of the Russian.

What appealed especially to Mark Twain in Russia was the spacious life of the country gentleman, in all its aspects so much like what he knew at home. Similar causes had produced similar results, and Russian hospitality had become as proverbial in Europe before the First World War as that of the South in the United States. Through the fabric of both ran a passionate concern with good food, good conversation, beautiful women, and fine horses. Even the architecture was of the same colonial style, for a country estate near Tula or Novgorod, with its wooden mansion and wide lawns, was strikingly like the plantations on the banks of the James or the lower Mississippi. Save for the black faces among the servants, a Russian travelling south of the Ohio in the middle of the last century, would have found himself almost wholly in a Russian atmosphere.

Some of the customs, even the old Russian idea of feudal homage to a lord, were duplicated in the South. When little Samuel was born to Jefferson and Varina Davis in 1853, slaves brought him the customary gifts of hens, eggs and yams,<sup>11</sup> a custom not far removed in its purport from the traditional gifts to a Russian lord of bread and salt by his serfs.

In some ways even the languages, so different externally, reflect in identical expressions the leisurely life of those spacious days. Ask a Russian who has spent his youth or a part of his life on a great estate any question involving the passage of time, and whether he be prince or peasant he will reply "*Seichas!*" If you look this up in the dictionary you will find it defined as "immediately," but don't be misled by that. It means nothing of the kind. It has precisely the same meaning as "Directly!" when spoken by a Southerner.

To the uninitiated there may seem to be no difference between "immediately" and "directly," but to a Southerner there is all the difference in the world. If, through some strange circumstance, he were compelled to use this word when he actually did mean "immediately" he would pronounce it very firmly, and emphasizing each syllable, as "di-rect-ly." But otherwise he would say "d'rec'ly," and mean in half an hour, half a day, or perhaps next week. For neither the Southerner nor the Russian has much regard for the value of time.

<sup>11</sup>Joseph Hergesheimer, *Swords and Roses*, N. Y., 1929, p. 89.

In one regard, however, the two countries were somewhat apart. A Russian aristocrat was born, lived, and usually died on the same estate, and Russian manors were as seldom sold or lost as those of England. In the old South, however, despite the prevailing romantic notions, it was rather unusual for a plantation to remain more than one generation in the same family. American belief in hereditary estates is a result of the era following the Civil War, when a planter had to remain on the same land because he could not find a buyer. Few Southerners spent their lives on the plantation where they were born.

Despite this particular difference the plantation and the Russian *pomestie* produced the same type of individual, alike in their vices as they were in their virtues. They were impetuous and uncontrolled, willing to stake everything at cards, on a horse, or in a duel. Scarcely a Southern family existed that could not name at least one member fallen on the field of honor, while two of Russia's greatest poets, Pushkin and Lermontov, met their deaths in duels.

Gentlemen bred in the leisurely tradition of a landed estate possessed little ability to conserve themselves physically or financially, and their abandon made proverbial the penniless Russian nobleman and the bankrupt American planter. By the reign of Alexander II, two-thirds of the private serfs in Russia were heavily mortgaged.

Absenteeism played a large part in bankrupting the Russian landowners. Russian novels and Russian life were full of absentee landlords who spent their days and nights in St. Petersburg and left their estates to be managed by German overseers. Among Tolstoy's principal characters, Levin was almost unique in his love for the land. Vronsky enjoyed rural life very much during his short period there with Anna, but it was only an interlude between long years in the capital and his flight to the Balkans to regain his soul in the Turkish war. In *War and Peace* old Prince Bolkonsky lived on the land because he was too crabbed and disagreeable to live anywhere else, but he didn't particularly like it, and he was hardly more useful there than he would have been in St. Petersburg. Prince Andrei, Pierre, and the Rostovs were like so many of their contemporaries who stayed in town and left the supervision of their estates to managers who were usually venal if Russian and over-strict if German—the Russian equivalent of the South's New England overseers.

In that regard the South presented a striking contrast, where there was almost no absenteeism because there were no great centers to act as magnets for the planters. Where absenteeism existed it re-



sulted from a search for health rather than for pleasure, as in the malarial sections of Louisiana and South Carolina. Even the practice of periodic visits to such centers as Richmond or Atlanta or Montgomery for supplies was a comparatively late development.

Charleston and New Orleans alone of Southern cities could be compared with St. Petersburg or Moscow as centers of social life for the gentry of each country. Louis Manigault was one of many who always stayed in Charleston from May until November,<sup>12</sup> but it was malaria that drove him and his associates there. In the winter when the social season in most cities was at its height, the Carolina planters were back on their estates.

Summertime Charleston was undoubtedly one of the gayest and most cosmopolitan cities in America. In 1790 with a population of 15,000, only half of which was white, Charleston boasted "a semi-public library, thriving bookstores, excellent newspapers, mantua makers and milliners in touch with Paris fashions, a thronged race course, dancing assemblies, and easy-mannered men's clubs." Also, in all likelihood, a golf course, for Savannah and Augusta each had one, and undoubtedly a great many "Boston clubs" where the planters could indulge in their favorite card game.

People of the North had about as much real knowledge of Southern life as of the interior of Russia itself. During the researches involved in his biography of Lincoln, Albert Beveridge found himself "flabbergasted" at his own misconceptions. "I have somewhat to this day the notion," he wrote Worthington C. Ford, "which I find on examination to be absurd and wickedly false, that Mrs. Stowe drew a faithful picture of Southern society and conditions. I looked at Charleston, for instance, as a mosquito-bitten, filthy spot inhabited by low-browed, lustful, brutal, and cruel men, and cringing women whose chief outdoor sport was to flail saintly Negroes to death."<sup>13</sup> And again, in writing to James A. Woodburn: "As I look back on it now it is almost incredible that intelligent persons could, for any cause, get into such a state of mind as that of my parents and family for nearly a generation after the war was over. The atmosphere in which I was brought up was well-nigh lurid; and the things that all of us were told by the politicians, and which all of us took for granted, formed a very tissue of hatred."<sup>14</sup> In discussing a piece of Abolitionist propaganda Senator Beveridge once said to

<sup>12</sup>Ulrich Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South*, Boston, 1929, p. 257.

<sup>13</sup>Claude G. Bowers, *Beveridge and the Progressive Era*, Boston, 1932, pp. 574-75

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 578.



Claude Bowers, his own biographer, "If I had lived in the South, and had a wife, a mother, sister, or sweetheart, and anyone had sent such an infamous thing to me, I would have felt like taking the first train North, shooting the wretch, and taking the consequences."<sup>15</sup>

Leo Tolstoy, though perhaps not so surprised at what he found as Beveridge, shared with him a great awakening when he investigated Russian social history for the purpose of writing *War and Peace*. In the pages of the great novel we find a true picture of life on the great estates in which brutality and ruthless cruelty play no part, a fact which astounded and annoyed many of his readers. He received countless letters bearing the same refrain: that he had not accurately portrayed the "character of the time," and in 1868 he published a defence in *Russkii Arkhiv* which, until the Revolution, was included in all the subsequent editions of *War and Peace*. For obvious reasons it is omitted from the Bolshevik editions, but it is strange to find that it is also almost always left out of the English translations.<sup>16</sup>

In studying letters, memoirs, and old mementoes I failed to find those horrors, this lawlessness and brutality, in any large degree. I can still find them today, or at any other time, if I look for them. In the time of which I write they loved, envied, searched for the truth, or served their passions in an intellectual and moral life of great complexity. If in our minds we have a picture of that era as one filled with brutality and lawlessness it is only because in the notes, legends, novels, and stories which reach us today the more brutal facts are emphasized.

Bond labor as an institution has been systematically attacked by all parties since its abolition. At worst it was almost as bad as the Abolitionists in America and the intelligentsia in Russia have pictured it; at best it was a system that gave security and contentment to the weak as well as to the strong.

But, good or bad, it was a wasteful institution, and incapable of survival when opposed to a capitalist system. On the day that the Mississippi planter found that he could hire Irish immigrants for dangerous work more cheaply than he could use his own slaves, or when Morozov and Putilov found that free peasants would work for less than it cost to support a serf, the system was doomed in both countries. Interest and idealism met, and on grounds of humanitarianism bond labor was abolished.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 573.

<sup>16</sup>It is included in the Inner Sanctum edition of *War and Peace*, N. Y., Simon and Schuster, 1942.

# Vladimir Soloviev and the Western World

By HELENE ISWOLSKY

AT THE close of the nineteenth century a Russian thinker expressed in his writings a dynamic religious teaching; he was the promoter of contemporary Russian Orthodox theology and the forerunner of the ecumenic movement, which aims to bring together all Christian churches and religious circles of the East and the West. Such was indeed the great dream of this philosopher, whose name was Vladimir Soloviev, and who, with Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, was the bearer of Russia's highest spiritual ideal.

One of Vladimir Soloviev's most remarkable traits was to have realized a perfect balance between the two worlds enclosed within Russia's limits: the East, and the West. Students of Russian nineteenth century culture are familiar with the two main patterns of thought according to which Russian writers conceived the destiny and mission of their native land. The Westerners looked towards Europe as a teacher and educator and welcomed the reforms of Peter the Great as a landmark which opened for Russia the era of true civilization. The Slavophiles, on the other hand, expressed their belief in purely national trends. Their ideology drew its inspiration from the Russian Orthodox Church and from Russian historical tradition born long before the reign of Peter the Great. They turned away from Western civilization in the name of an original social and political ideal; not only did they consider this ideal self-sufficient, but of a higher religious and ethical quality than that of the West, undermined, according to them, by atheism and mercantilism.

Among the exponents of both trends there were many brilliant historians, novelists, and journalists, whose names are linked with the masterworks of Russian literature. But both movements finally degenerated, bringing about biased interpretations of Russian life and development: either an excessive admiration for Western influences, or a fanatical belief that "light cometh from the East alone." The Westerners absorbed the teachings of materialism and of an atheist sociology. The Slavophiles became extreme nation-

alists and reactionaries, forming the group of the so-called "Epigones." It was against both of these perverted ideologies that Vladimir Soloviev waged an intellectual and religious struggle. He was a convinced liberal, but he did not share the atheist and nihilist theories adopted by the intelligentsia, and he was one of the first Moscow professors to reassert the principles of a Christian philosophy. He was profoundly conscious of Russia's spiritual values, but he was at the same time aware of the fact that Christianity is a universal faith which cannot be encompassed in the limits of one nation or shaped in the mould of one historical tradition. He was for a time in tune with the Slavophiles, but later drifted apart from them and opened an attack against "the Epigones" and what he called "zoological nationalism."

Because of Soloviev's universal and yet typically Russian outlook, that is an outlook deeply imbued with the spirituality of the Christian East, his thought and his personality itself may appear baffling. Let us recall that, although sharing Dostoevsky's belief in Russia's religious mission, he at the same time believed in the creative forces of Western Christianity. It would, however, be more correct to state that Soloviev beheld a common foundation for the Churches of the East and the West, a foundation deeply shaken by dissensions, but which was to be restored through the reconciliation of all Christians. In this respect, Soloviev's mystical conception was both an immediate and a long-range one. He felt that it was the urgent duty of Christians in the East and the West to work on behalf of reunion; but at the end of his life, his religious perspectives shifted more and more away from historical and theological speculations to a prophetic vision. In his famous essay entitled "Three Conversations," translated into many languages, Soloviev drew a striking picture of the reunion of the Churches such as would be accomplished at the end of time. He showed the Antichrist seeking to found his own godless church, opposed by three symbolic figures: Pope Peter, Priest John, and Pastor Paoli, obviously incarnating the Catholic, the Greek Orthodox, and the Protestant faiths. These three Christian leaders are reunited through persecution and martyrdom, thus bringing about the reconciliation of the Churches.

Because of this spirit of universality, Soloviev naturally awakened the interest of Western scholars. His influence outside Russia, wherever universal problems are examined, has been growing continuously. A number of books, articles, commentaries, and philo-

sophical papers have been devoted in Europe and America to Soloviev's life and works. But before summing up the rôle played by this Russian thinker in the Western world, let us briefly recall the essential traits of his doctrine.

As we have said, Soloviev was a forerunner of the ecumenic movement of our day; yet this ecumenic task was not his only concern. His religious thought spread far beyond purely ecclesiastical and historical matters. It was a mystical vision of what he called the *all-unity*, or *oneness* of Christ, of the *God-man*. In Christ humanity was to be reborn and regenerated in order to achieve in its turn that Unity which is God Himself. Oneness, according to Soloviev, is the primary goal of all things created; the incarnation of Christ is a continual process; the world, being the expression of God's divine thought and love, is to realize a "totality of being," a supreme unity, which Soloviev defined as the "world-soul." He also gave it the name of "Wisdom of God" ("Sophia" in Greek) which is described in the Book of Proverbs: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything in the beginning." This is what has been called "the Sophiological element" of Soloviev's teaching; it is, no doubt, the most difficult to grasp, especially for the Western mind, unfamiliar with the mysticism of the Christian East. However, the study of this Sophiological element is indispensable to the full understanding of Soloviev's message to the world. The unceasing process of Christ's incarnation in the world meant for Soloviev the possibility for each man to be deified. It meant a living source of perfection, a creative ethical system, one of the most complete and consistent systems evolved by a Christian philosopher in our time.

But the cosmic Christological action, as conceived by Soloviev, does not only exercise itself on individual man. It is also the moving force of human society working towards perfection. Therefore, we find in Soloviev's writings all the essential principles of a social Christianity, seeking charity and justice for all, in a transfigured, deified community.

It was because of this absolute Unity "at the beginning of all things" that Soloviev developed a profound Christian humanism, rejecting all forms of intolerance, political tyranny, racial discrimination, national pride, and religious prejudice. One may truly say that long before the creation of totalitarian systems, which he did not live to see, Soloviev denounced totalitarianism and state idolatry.

And we can also clearly understand the meaning of Soloviev's ecumenic work, as linked to his doctrine of All-Unity. The reunion of the Churches was to be part of the cosmic movement towards *oneness*. Dissensions among Christians could not be overcome through scholarly debates and arguments which Soloviev called "a negative theology." They could only be overcome supernaturally. The separation of the Churches was a wound inflicted upon the mystical body of Christ, and this wound was to be healed through the collective will of all Christians.

Deeply devoted as he was to Russia, Soloviev could not admit Russian particularism either in theory or in action. Through his writings and speeches he became the leader of Orthodox culture, yet he did not follow the Slavophiles in their complete and exclusive obedience to the established Russian Church. He wrote that Orthodoxy had sprung from a Church universal and undivided, such as it had developed during the first ages of Christianity and up to the eleventh century. He considered that Russia had been separated from the Universal Church only *de facto* and not *de jure*. This realization of a common heritage to be restored was to lead Soloviev to his intercourse with the Catholic Bishop, Monsignor Strossmayer, himself a fervent apostle of Union and the promoter of the Slavonic liturgy in the Catholic East. Moreover, some of Soloviev's biographers believe that he personally joined the Catholic Church, though no official or public act confirmed this step. The issue remains to date controversial, but as we have seen Soloviev had above all a strong sense of spiritual kinship, a *universal consciousness*, which did not "choose" between different Churches, but rather beheld them as already united in Christ.

As we have said, Soloviev's universal spirit has attracted Western scholars, and this especially during recent years. The study of Sophiology and of the theory of Godmanhood is an indispensable key to the understanding of contemporary Russian theology which is awakening a growing interest in Western religious circles, both Protestant and Catholic. Moreover, Soloviev's mystical vision, the generosity of his outlook, the deep and fervent charity which inspired him, and the noble quality of his writings, is a valuable contribution to the religious revival of our time.

Speaking of Soloviev's influence in the West, it must be remembered that his works dealing with reunion were first written and published in French. They came out abroad, because of Tsarist censorship and the suspicious attitude of the Holy Russian Synod



of that time. Therefore, France and England became acquainted with Soloviev's ecumenic thought even before it was fully known in Russia.

French and English Catholic scholars were naturally attracted by Soloviev's conception of the Universal Church and even called him the "Russian Newman." But for some time at least, they remained unaware of the extreme complexity of Soloviev's religious experience, as for instance, of the intricacies of his Sophiological theme.

Protestant theologians and scholars also took up the study of Soloviev's Christian philosophy; but instead of analyzing separately his ecumenic tendencies, they were interested in his teaching as a whole, that is in his cosmic approach to religion, ethics, and sociology.

Making a survey of the various studies devoted to Soloviev in European countries, we find among the first books to have appeared there on that subject the work of Father d'Herbigny, the French Jesuit scholar. D'Herbigny's book was crowned by the French Academy and in 1918 was translated into English. The author gives a good outline of the great Russian thinker's life, personality, and doctrine. But, as pointed out above, this Catholic interpretation is not exhaustive, leaving out some significant traits of Soloviev's world-conception.

However, d'Herbigny is a fervent admirer of Soloviev, and as such has brought out many important aspects concerning him: he rightly describes the loneliness of the man and of the thinker and at the same time his deep love and fraternity towards his fellows. D'Herbigny also stresses the crystal-clear integrity of Soloviev's thought and writings as well as his rejection of all forms of nationalist or political idolatry. He recalls the pages in which Soloviev condemned anti-semitism and he also quotes the famous words he uttered in his opening lecture as a Moscow professor:

"In every sphere of his activity, and before all else, man dreams of liberty."

Among the first writers in the West who took an interest in Soloviev, we find Mrs. Nathalie J. Duddington, who in 1917 devoted to the Russian philosopher an excellent article in the *Hibbert Journal*.<sup>1</sup> Interpreting Soloviev's universal doctrine, Mrs. Duddington speaks of his belief in a "cosmic process" developing through a

<sup>1</sup>Boston, April 1917.



"threefold fruition": the deification of nature, the perfection of man, the formation of a complete community. Mrs. Duddington clearly shows how much this "total and concrete revelation of the divine" appeals to the Russian mind and heart.

The translation of Soloviev's main ethical works, *Justification of Good* (by Nathalie Duddington) and *The Spiritual Foundations of Life* (by George Tsebrikov) considerably aided Solovievian studies in the West. Following the publication of these translations (the first in English and the second in French), two Western writers, Father Adhemar d'Ales and Father Mac Arthur, devoted special essays to Soloviev the moralist. D'Ales<sup>2</sup> sums up Soloviev's ethical system by quoting from *The Spiritual Foundations of Life* characteristic lines offered as a final criterion of human action: "Let us take no important decision in personal or community life without summoning in our soul the image of Christ and asking ourselves how would He act in this case."

Mac Arthur<sup>3</sup> also stresses this essential aspect of Soloviev's ethics, that is his profound sense of Christ, the God-Man, acting upon the world and inspiring mankind, not with an abstract moral code, but with the living spirit of God. And Mac Arthur points out that Soloviev was true to the Greek Christian tradition when he spoke of the works of Christ in terms of regeneration rather than in those of redemption. He thus, according to Mac Arthur, avoided the Western legalistic terminology of punishment, ransom, and satisfaction, which has a tendency to obscure the metaphysical significance of the incarnation.

Such an analysis of Soloviev's ethical thought and of its profound link with Eastern mystical theology shows how far Western thought has progressed in the understanding of the fundamentals of Russian Orthodoxy. We may thus observe a gradual unfolding of Soloviev's thought in the interpretation of his writings by Western scholars. This unfolding and revelation of the true Soloviev is also quite obvious in the work devoted to him by Father Friedrich Muckerman. This book, published in Switzerland shortly before the author's death, is entitled *Soloviev, Zur Begegnung Zwischen Russland und dem Abendland* (Soloviev, Towards the Meeting of Russia and the West).<sup>4</sup> The very title of this book reveals Muckerman's profound belief that Soloviev's mystical conception of the world and mankind as

<sup>1</sup>*Thought*, September 1933.

<sup>2</sup>*The Church Quarterly Review*, London, October-December 1940.

<sup>3</sup>Verlag Otto Walter, Olten, Switzerland, 1945.

the incarnation of Divine Unity tends to bridge the gap between the East and the West. He also stresses the Christological source of this conception and points out that this is no abstract system, but a concrete religious experience, an experience which concerns not only the salvation of the individual, but of humanity as a whole. Muckerman reminds us that Soloviev expressed an essentially social Christianity and that he was "as the beating heart of liberated mankind;" indeed, he achieved through his own lifework that which it may be hoped, will be achieved by all peoples—the realization that Eastern and Western Christianity, Eastern and Western spiritual cultures, are deeply intermingled and closely bound together. The very fact that such supernatural fruit has sprung from Russian soil is sufficient proof, the author stressed, that Russia is not a distant and alien country, but shares the great Christian heritage of Europe and the world. And Muckerman adds that Soloviev never ceased to consider himself as the true son of the Russian people and of the Russian soil, yet he "achieved this miracle" of conceiving the destiny of man and society on a universal scale.

One must also mention among the important works devoted to Vladimir Soloviev in recent years the dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago in 1939 by the American Protestant scholar, William Henry Dunphy. This is an extremely forceful and accurate analysis of Soloviev's main philosophical and religious trends. Mr. Dunphy states that it is precisely "all-unity" which is the central thread in Soloviev's philosophy; it interprets history as the incarnation of the Absolute in the various forms of creation achieved through "overcoming the disruptiveness of nature and humanity." This is an organic process which unifies, without destroying, the reality and autonomy of created things. Another essential aspect of Soloviev's teaching is, as pointed out by Mr. Dunphy, the idea of God-manhood, the Union of God and man through Christ. The author of the dissertation calls Soloviev's approach "Christocentric," and he adds that Soloviev's Christ is not the humanitarian and moralistic preacher whom our modern age tries to substitute for the God-man, but verily "the Christ of the Gospels and of Christian tradition." There are few Christian philosophers who, in Mr. Dunphy's opinion, have so clearly expressed and held in so complete a balance the two opposite natures of Christ, true God and true man. And speaking of Soloviev's work on behalf of Unity, the author brings out the dynamic character of this work; he writes that the dissensions which had torn the Univer-

sal Church were in the eyes of the Russian thinker a "cosmic calamity"; in order to overcome it, Soloviev wanted humanity first to be "transformed into the body of Christ."

We regret not to be able to review more fully the numerous and remarkable studies that are being pursued in the West concerning the works and religious experience of Vladimir Soloviev. Let us only add that Russian scholars in Europe and America have also contributed to this research. In 1938, Dr. D. Stremoukhov submitted to the University of Strasbourg, a dissertation in French entitled *Soloviev et son oeuvre messianique* (*Soloviev and His Messianic Work*), which is one of the most exhaustive studies in this field. Furthermore, Dr. N. Zernov published, in 1944, in London the text of his English lectures in which he extensively spoke of Soloviev. And in New York, in the same year, Peter P. Zubov edited an English translation of Soloviev's *Godmanhood*, which figures among the latter's most significant works. Commenting upon this English version of *Godmanhood*, Dr. Irwin Edman, Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University, wrote that this book is "a unique and uniquely influential fountainhead in modern Russian philosophy," and, therefore, deserves the full attention of the American reader. Mr. Zubov has added to Soloviev's writings an excellent introduction, or rather an essay on the Christocentric teaching offered in these pages.

The various works devoted to Soloviev in the West during the last decades have undoubtedly contributed to a deeper understanding of the great Russian philosopher whose message is spreading to all countries. This message seems indeed more vital than ever in our disrupted world, where Christians of every faith are desperately seeking peace and unity, that unity in Christ which Soloviev beheld in his prophetic vision.

# Soviet Culture: Old Trends and New\*

By GEORGE C. GUINS

THE Soviet government cannot be accused of a lack of interest in problems of culture. Immediately after the October Revolution, a Commission for the Preservation of Historical Monuments was established. Later, when Gorky drew the attention of Lenin, with whom he was on friendly terms, to the destitute condition of scholars, the Central Commission for the Improvement of the Living Standard of Scholars, later renamed Commission for the Assistance of Scholars, was created on Lenin's orders. Stalin, too, has acquired the reputation of a Maecenas. His name is attached to the prizes awarded to Soviet scholars, writers, artists, musicians, and actors. The award of a medal with Stalin's portrait is accompanied by a large monetary prize up to 200,000 rubles. Apart from the prizes, some writers, playwrights, painters, and actors earn large sums of money from the sale of their works, their production on the stage, and filming.

In Soviet Russia a great number of books are published, and many new learned institutions are founded every year. The number of universities has increased 250 per cent as compared with pre-revolutionary times, reaching the figure 32, and the number of specialized schools for the training of different types of specialists has surpassed 800. The Academy of Sciences has greatly enlarged its scope of activity, and its branches have spread all over the country, as have the various institutes for research. In Moscow, the Library of the former Rumiantsev Museum, renamed the Lenin Library, has been considerably enlarged. It comprises over 11 million books.

The theatre has also come into its share of attention. Moscow boasts now of twenty-three theatres. Opera houses and drama theatres have also been established in the provinces, in all the Soviet republics, including the Asiatic. Recently, since the Second World War, even some *kolkhozes* have been acquiring their own motion picture equipment.

The number of museums is also on the increase. Especially note-

\*This is a chapter from the author's projected book *Inside the Soviet Empire*.

worthy are the State Museum of Literature in Moscow, the Kolomna Museum of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the various museums dedicated to the memory of famous Russian writers and composers. One must add also the Moscow Planetarium.

The scope of cultural activities has undoubtedly grown. However, a mere enumeration of the newly established cultural institutions will give no understanding of the character of Soviet culture. As everything else in the Soviet Union, culture has acquired a specific character and flavor.

# I

All aspects of cultural life and work in the Soviet Union are subordinated to the policies and the ideology of the Communist Party, in no lesser degree than are all the phases of national economy. *Pravda* gives in this regard definite directives: "Economic, political and cultural problems present, within Socialist construction, an indissoluble unity, and the leading part is played by the policy of the Bolshevik party. . . . Apolitical literature or art tend to breed the spirit of petty bourgeoisie. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

Under these conditions not every talented writer, scholar, painter, or even musician or actor can reach financial independence, let alone preserve it to the end of his days. In Soviet Russia there is no such thing as a free literary market or private publishing houses, and a scholar or a writer may, therefore, be deprived of a chance to see his work published if it should be deemed undeserving of encouragement, or worse still, pronounced ideologically harmful. A play may not be passed for production, a picture may fail to be purchased by a state museum, and there are no private galleries. Even a musical composition may not find a purchaser and would not be distributed unless it were considered in keeping with the present trend of socialist society.

In the Academy of Sciences to make sure that the Academy carries out the tasks imposed upon it by the government, all those who are members of the Communist Party are supervising those who are not. "Scientists of the Communist Party," says *Pravda* "must guide the development of scientific work."<sup>2</sup>

On May 1, 1947, the president of the Academy of Sciences of the U. S. S. R., the presidents of nine academies of different Union

<sup>1</sup>"The Policy of the Bolshevik Party," *Pravda*, December 9, 1946.

<sup>2</sup>*Pravda*, October 23, 1946.



Republics, and some others appealed to all those working in the field of science, literature, and the arts:

We appeal to you . . . to unmask war-mongers and aggressors, to demonstrate falsehoods and narrow-mindedness of the bourgeois democracy, to reveal the reactionary essence of the ideology of the contemporary imperialistic bourgeoisie and of the "reformists" who actually serve it. We must . . . lead a decisive struggle against the servility of some Soviet citizens towards contemporary bourgeois culture. It is a duty . . . to disclose the most important problems of Marxism-Leninism, and to propagate materialist philosophy . . .

These demands are comparatively little felt in the activities of specialists in the fields of technical work or in natural sciences; on the other hand, they quite definitely hamper scholarly work in the realm of philosophy and the humanities. Small wonder, therefore, that those branches of knowledge which shape men's opinions and determine the principles of social intercourse are prisoners of the official views and are at a standstill. Even official Soviet sources recognize this fact:<sup>3</sup>

The acceptance of the principles of Leninism-Stalinism as gospel truths and the inadmissibility of any deviation from them is the foremost specific trait and also the most important restriction on the development of literature, drama, and the arts. Philosophy, history, ethics founded upon the principle of class struggle are one-sided and dreary. Without God, without a moral basis, accepting as justified any violence to be done to the enemy, these branches of Soviet thought are at sharp variance with similar strivings of the human mind among the countries of the West.

## II

The technical achievements of the West, industrialization, scientific research, and Western materialism flourishing upon the foundation of capitalism with its corollary, a desire for riches, have been accepted bodily by Socialism. Soviet Socialism bases its further plans upon developments in the technical field, and its hope for further improvements of machine production in human existence has

<sup>3</sup>"Our theoretical workers in the field of philosophy, economics, history, and law are lagging behind the increasing demands of life and practical problems." *Bolshevik*, No. 15, 1946—editorial.

"It is seldom that a serious philosophical study appears in print." Svetlov, Acting Minister of Higher Education of U. S. S. R., *Pravda*, March 10, 1947.



been founded entirely upon material considerations, with the sole difference that the newly acquired riches would be the property of all instead of the upper classes alone.

Nevertheless, there is a substantial difference between the culture of the West and that of the Soviet Union. Although the capitalist West is a prey to materialist culture, it has not renounced either religion or idealism. These elements are encouraged by the church, by philosophy and ethics. Historical tradition has full sway, and in the spiritual life of the West there continue to exist and function ideas and trends hostile to the materialist viewpoint. This struggle of ideas and principles expresses the Western man's realization of his imperfection as well as the shortcomings of the existence he has created for himself. In the Soviet Union, on the contrary, the slightest manifestation of idealism has become taboo. The materialist approach to life has become sovereign ruler of the thoughts and conduct of the people. In the Soviet world, socialism has become not merely a means for improving life, but the ultimate goal, a sort of idol to whom all must be sacrificed.

Besides the difference of ethical principles, the character and development of Western culture has been influenced by the differences of the social groups forming its cultural elements. In the West the historically formed stratification of society and hierarchy of social groups, the division into upper and lower classes, has continued to form the basis of social life. Each group introduces into the treasury of the national culture its contribution; each possesses its own preferences, its life philosophy and purposes. Because of this, life is more picturesque and varied. The democratic foundations of the state structure of Western nations vouchsafe the possibility of moving from one class of society into another, and the betterment of their material conditions by means of an organized struggle for their interests. This possibility makes the existing inequalities bearable. All are interested in the material progress of their country where every one may hope to improve his condition; this, in turn, encourages creative effort from the entire nation.

In the Soviet Union the upper classes of the pre-revolutionary time have been exterminated and, theoretically, universal equality has been established without any division into upper and lower classes. The actual inequality has not only failed to disappear, but is on the increase. This, however, does not produce divergent life philosophies, or finds reflection in the development of culture, since the life outlook, ethics, and the conception of progress

spring from one source and are fed by the same prefabricated ideology. The diffusion of the Soviet system is accompanied, as the example of Eastern Europe after the war has shown, by the same enforced destruction of social groups guilty of an alien conception of life and spiritual values, as has been the case in Russia.

The third basic difference between Western culture and the Soviet lies in the difference of dominant ideas and conceptions. In the West, both culture and democracy have arisen upon the foundation of individualism. The Western state exists in order to protect the rights of the individual and to guarantee to every citizen the chance of building his life according to his own desires. The Bill of Rights forms the essence of the American Constitution and the true basis of American democracy. Even though individualist culture furthers the development of selfishness and an abuse of liberty in the form of rapaciousness, this becomes mitigated by the organization of social forces and by a system of political and economic cooperation. In Soviet Russia, on the other hand, collectivism holds full sway. Soviet culture inculcates the conviction that man is but a tiny particle of the nation, and that his purpose in life is to live and toil for the realization of the great aims of the State and even of humanity. Soviet periodicals and press depict "the Soviet man" as a totally new type, the product of a new culture. But in real life such a type may appear as an exception, hardly as a rule, since it is merely artificially bred instead of being widely prevalent. Thus both the State and the Party must have recourse to reprisals, and even terror, in order to wipe out inborn human egotism and a desire to further one's own interests at the expense of the State.

In view of their ends to create a new type of Socialist world, Soviet leaders regard themselves as the greatest carriers of culture, called upon to reeducate the nations of Western Europe. One of the heroes of Voinova's novel, *East and West*, announces that "In Europe there is moral chaos, there is not one new idea there, no hope for the future." At the same time, the feeling of superiority of Soviet culture over those of the Eastern peoples permeates all writings dealing with the relationship of the Soviet Union with the countries of the East. The interrelationship of Soviet culture in general and the cultures of Asiatic nations inhabiting the republics of the Soviet Union can be illustrated by the architecture of Soviet buildings in these republics. Buildings of European type are modified by some minor detail of Oriental design. The influence of the East is definitely confined to the exterior. Stimulating and supporting the progress of

backward tribes, the Soviet government does not forget its final purposes and the principles of the Comintern. It does not let the local nationalism of Turco-Tartars, Georgians, etc., acquire too much importance in literature, the theater, or the arts.<sup>4</sup>

### III

The basic purpose of Soviet leaders is not only the creation and defense of a special "Soviet" culture, surpassing all those already in existence, but the drawing into the sphere of its influence of broad masses of the population, and the adaptation of this culture to mass consumption.

However, the adaptation of a culture to the needs and understanding of the masses necessitates the reduction of this culture to its simplest forms. A book, a play, or a film must be such as to be within the grasp of the average. The chief idea is to educate the masses in a certain direction, and this calls for simplification. Writers and artists, limited in their work, await directives or "orders." Instead of endeavors to attain perfection, simplification reigns. Culture gains in quantity at the expense of quality. Thus, for example, the need for mass distribution and for reaching the largest number of persons causes an inevitable cheapening in the outward appearance and quality of printed matter in the interests of economy. The more books designed for mass consumption are published, the worse is their appearance. Newspapers are so monotonously uniform that they must be read solely because the readers wish to acquaint themselves with the wishes of the administration. Editorials call to mind school texts. Glorification of the leaders, especially of Stalin, designed to be read by half-illiterate people, is grossly overdone. Thus, *Pravda* of January 6, 1947, in an article entitled "The Great Coryphaeus of Science" announced that the Kiev Academy of Sciences had nominated Stalin to the Supreme Council of the U. S. S. R. as the "scientific genius of our time."

While in literature, art, and music simplification strikes the key note, in science the stress is upon practical application. "Cultural workers" are invited "to concentrate their entire activity on the fulfillment of the practical task of building up a new life."<sup>5</sup> In harmony with the materialist trend in Soviet culture with a predominance of practical considerations, scientific achievements of the

<sup>4</sup>Editorial in *The Bolshevik*, No. 17-18, 1944.

<sup>5</sup>*Moscow News*, November 30, 1946.

Soviets are observed mostly in the field of technical knowledge, agriculture, soil science, medicine, engineering.

One must also bear in mind the serious work done by Russian historians in the field of early Russian history, particularly the work of Grekov, Derzhavin, Basilevich, and Likhachov, and in Russian linguistics and Slavic literature, such as the work of Meshchaninov, Shakhmatov and their pupils, academicians Orlov and Obnorsky.

Regarding public education, practical considerations prevail there also. The industrialization of the country demands mass preparation and training of technical personnel. However, mass operations in this field have just as lamentable an effect on quality as in the matter of adapting literature or art to the understanding of the masses. Thus, the unsatisfactory quality of the trained personnel was quite noticeable and with the second half of 1946-47 a five-year curriculum was introduced in all colleges of the U. S. S. R. Similarly, the courses for the training of personnel supplying technicians to the *kolkhozes* have been lengthened.<sup>6</sup>

The 1947 budget for social and cultural needs of the U. S. S. R. shows an increase of 26.7 billion, as compared with 1946. (Total: 107.1 billion rubles.) The number of schools has grown, and the salaries of teachers, especially in higher education, have been increased. The sum allotted to teaching alone is 52.4 billion for 1947. The schools of higher education, counting among them art schools, music schools, schools for librarians, and specialized courses in the steel and textile industries, propose to educate 696,000 students.

In practice, the realization of the extensive plans of the Soviet government meets many obstacles, almost impossible to foresee, let alone to overcome. Now it is a lack of building space, now a shortage of textbooks or teachers.<sup>7</sup>

The report of a recent session of the Council of Ministers of the R. S. F. S. R. informs that: "In a number of districts and regions . . . a considerable number of students leave schools . . . before the end of the school program. Schools are provided inadequately with building space, heat, light, and supplies."<sup>8</sup> *Pravda's* editorial of March 24, 1947, draws attention to the following facts: "The Ministry of the Coal Industry of the Western districts has prepared but one third of their schools; that of the Eastern districts—nearly one half."

<sup>6</sup>*Izvestia*, February 28, 1947.

<sup>7</sup>*Izvestia*, March 28, 1947, and July 15, 1947; *Pravda*, March 24, 1947.

<sup>8</sup>*Izvestia*, March 22, 1947.

These are only a few examples of the actual production lagging behind the proposed school program. Some progress is evident, however, in the preparation and training of technical workers. The latter will undoubtedly receive increasing attention of the government.

#### IV

In the interval between the two world wars, the Soviet Union consolidated its industrial and military might in order to protect its independence in case of an attack of the capitalist powers. After World War II, the U. S. S. R. began to aspire to a leading part in the affairs of the world; this aspiration settles the lines along which cultural work is to develop.

Since, according to Soviet leaders, culture is identical with politics, all efforts of "cultural workers" must be directed toward glorifying the Soviet régime and the Soviet State. The Communist Party will apply every effort to prevent the appearance and the spread of competing bourgeois culture. In the field of literature, the theatre, the cinema, this has already been done by corresponding edicts of the Party, issued in August and September, 1946. "We are to teach the decaying West, not vice versa," is the leit-motif of the Party, as expounded openly by the Secretary General Zhdanov, in his speech on the magazines *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*.

Directives relating to literature cannot be fully applied to the fine arts or music. However, even here party publications insist on directing the work along certain channels. Criticisms of pictures of prominent Soviet artists point out that Soviet art differs from pre-revolutionary art in its optimistic realism. For example, the painter Plastov, who was awarded the Stalin prize, stresses in his painting that work is "a source of happiness." Plastov's landscapes always have human figures as an embodiment of the creative principle. The same optimism is evident in the pictures of Romadin, especially in his painting "Volga, the Russian River."<sup>9</sup>

On the occasion of the jubilee of V. J. Shebalin, Director of the Conservatory of Music, the following was written:

V. J. Shebalin, a musician of extensive education, deeply understands the foremost aim of Soviet music—that of creating a series of brilliant dynamic pictures and monumental works glorifying our actuality. In his symphony

<sup>9</sup>*Moscow News*, December 7, 1946.



"Lenin" the composer endeavors to express the great man, thinker, and revolutionary leader, and the people's affection for him.<sup>10</sup>

Thus all branches of art must inspire the Soviet people with optimism, energy, and the conviction of superiority of Soviet culture and of Soviet socialism. In particular, Soviet art is not encouraged to advertise pacifism. In a review of an exhibition of the Tretyakov Art Galleries in Moscow, the stress is laid upon the virtues of battle scenes by the late artist M. Grekov, who depicts some episodes of the Civil War and expresses the martial spirit of the people. These pictures, the *Moscow News* observes, contain not a trace of that pacifism which is so noticeable in the famous battle pictures of Vereshchagin.

Writers are united in the Soviet Writers' Union; artists, painters, composers—in that of Soviet Artists, Painters, Composers, etc. It is not permitted now to be classified in such groups as "exponents of realism," "modernism," and so on, as had been possible in the past. If a work is too refined or too individual in spirit and, therefore, comprehensible to but a few, it finds no encouragement. On the other hand, works of wide popularity, such as the songs, "You Broad Fields," "Katiusha," or the poem by K. Simonov, "Wait for Me"—simple and popular in sentiment—have every chance to be pushed forward.

Soviet culture in the post-war world will undoubtedly give increasing encouragement to all sorts of practical pursuits and research. Even sports, just as before the War, will serve first and foremost as a means of training young men for the task of defending their country or fighting for its supremacy, as the case may be. The Soviet Union numbers something like sixty thousand sport clubs with a membership of twelve million. They train young people to cross streams by swimming and carrying weights, to bale out with parachutes, to ski over long stretches in the North, to climb mountains, to throw grenades, etc. An organization such as "Osaviochim," that is the Society for the Advancement of Aviation and Chemistry, is in fact more military than "cultural."

The Soviet Union is aiming at consolidation of world leadership. Accordingly, one may expect increased consideration for cultural work along the lines outlined above. One idea will dominate everything—the fighting idea of the Soviet state and the doctrines of Lenin and Stalin. Communism is getting ready for action. The ideological front is being strengthened, and, simultaneously, everything is being done to raise the prestige of Soviet culture abroad.

<sup>10</sup>*Izvestia*, January 25, 1947.

# Eugene Schuyler:

## Diplomat Extraordinary from the United States to Russia 1867-1876

BY MARION MOORE COLEMAN

One can't have time to know everything. Take the subjects you are most interested in and let the others alone. You are like me, you can become easily interested in almost anything, and we are both tempted continually to study up some new thing. I try quite rigidly to confine myself to four connected subjects.<sup>1</sup>

This advice, which was also in the nature of a confession, was written from Russia by Eugene Schuyler to his sister Evelyn in Central New York. At the time of writing, Schuyler occupied the post of United States Consul in Moscow. "I try to confine myself," he went on to his sister, "but am continually running over . . . history, literature, language and mythology . . . these are my four," to which he might have added, "and the connecting link binding all these branches together is the single theme—Russia."

In the autumn of 1863, at a crucial moment in the history of the American Union, the Russian fleet under Admiral Lissovsky paid a visit, it will be recalled, to various ports of the American coastal states, and in New York especially was accorded a most enthusiastic welcome. It was this chance occurrence, we learn from Schuyler's sister,<sup>2</sup> that was responsible for channelling the future diplomat's interest and attention Russia-ward. Up to this time the young man's energies had had no point of focus, his well-known "eagerness to see sights"<sup>3</sup> no direction. Had it not been for this fortuitous incident, there is no telling where he would have turned in his search for the new.

Both at Yale, where he had graduated in 1859 and later taken his Ph.D. in 1861, and at Columbia where in 1863 he was studying law, Schuyler was famous for his enthusiasm for the unknown. He himself thought this was nothing more than "a laudable curiosity," but

<sup>1</sup>Eugene Schuyler, *Selected Essays, with a Memoir*, by Evelyn S. Schaeffer, New York, Scribners, 1901, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 18.

admitted that, while he seldom went out of his way to see anything, "if anything comes along, I consider it a duty . . . as well as a reasonable source of pleasure, to know what is to be known."<sup>4</sup>

Well, in September, 1863, as we have said, the Russian fleet did "come along," and Schuyler's chance meeting with its officers, at a social function given in their honor, marked the beginning of a life-long dedication on the young man's part to the knowing of what was to be known, of the country and people that had sent the fleet to our waters.

As the Russian fleet lay in New York harbor, there was another American, besides Schuyler, who also was to have his life's course altered radically by his meeting with the Russian officers and crew. More widely remembered today than Schuyler, thanks to his translation of Sienkiewicz's *Quo Vadis?*, this other American was Jeremiah Curtin, a graduate of Harvard in the class of 1863, and exactly Schuyler's own age. With Curtin, however, the effect of the visit to the fleet was not nearly so revolutionary as it was in Schuyler's case, for he had studied Russian at Harvard,<sup>5</sup> by himself, of course, but with the warm encouragement of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Schuyler, on the other hand, had had no previous experience of the language. All he knew of Russian was what he had learned at Yale from Professor Whitney or picked up from Max Müller's popular *Science of Language*, and this was, obviously, of a purely theoretical nature.

Once having heard Russian spoken, having mingled with the Russian crew aboard ship, Schuyler knew that here was something that must be pursued further, and he was not satisfied until he had made arrangements to begin the long task of learning "what was to be known" of the Russian language. He began at once to take lessons with a Russian priest, whose identity we have so far been unable to discover, as the first Russian parish in New York was not organized until in January, 1870. It is probable that his first lessons were received from the fleet's own chaplain, who, as long as the vessels remained in New York, conducted services for the officers and crew in Trinity Church.<sup>6</sup>

Less than a year after the commencement of his Russian studies,

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>See Jeremiah Curtin, *Memoirs*, Wisconsin Historical Society, 1940, pp. 11 and 70-72.

<sup>6</sup>Mr. Ernest Shore has done some research for us in this field, and this information is based on a letter to him from Archpriest Peter G. Kochanik of Passaic, N. J.

we find Schuyler so convinced of the future importance of the language, and of the Slavic tongues in general, as to declare, in a review of Benjamin Dwight's *Modern Philology* published in the *North American Review*, "We here take occasion to say that a study of the Slavic languages would be of great benefit to a philological student. They stand next and not far off in usefulness to the Sanskrit. . . ."<sup>7</sup>

Besides his study of the language, Schuyler was to proceed, in his exploration of Russia, along four distinct lines of interest. The struggle upward of Russia's long enslaved and but recently liberated peasantry, together with the liberalization of her intellectual classes, was one of the four lines. The problem of "Russia and Europe" was another. Russian daily life, the manners and customs of the people, also interested him. But first of all, and perhaps, foremost in attractiveness as long as he lived, was the absorbing and timely issue of Russia's relations with Asia, especially with Central Asia, where in the '60's of the last century Russian expansion was going on at a pace unmatched either before or since, until in our very own day.

Russian activities in Central Asia had been brought into popular focus in the west by the Crimean War. Subsequently the question had been kept alive, and even inflamed, by the revelations of the Hungarian Orientalist Armin Vámbéry. Vámbéry, it seems, had travelled through the hitherto forbidden region of Central Asia in the guise of a dervish. His daring in attempting such an enterprise and his success in "getting away with it," made a strong appeal to the imagination of readers on both sides of the Atlantic, and Vámbéry's *Travels*, published in London in English in 1864, was widely read and discussed over here as in England.<sup>8</sup>

Vámbéry's work was not, however, the first book to carry Schuyler's imagination to the wild and alluring steppe-land of Asia. Long before, as a child in Ithaca, New York, Schuyler had spent the first money he ever had for a book whose scene is this very region.<sup>9</sup> Reading this, he had fallen at a very early age under the spell of Bokhara

<sup>7</sup>*North American Review*, Vol. 99, Oct. 1864, p. 611.

<sup>8</sup>Vámbéry, *Travels and Adventures in Central Asia*, London, 1864. There was a long review, for example, in the popular *All the Year Round*, edited by Charles Dickens (Vol. 13, Feb. 11, 1865, pp. 66-72). Other books published about this time that aroused interest in Central Asia were, *The Russians in Central Asia*, translations by John and Robert Mitchell from the most authoritative and up-to-date Russian material. It is interesting to note that Schuyler knew Mitchell in Russia later and said he was the only English-speaking official except himself with a thorough knowledge of Russian; see *Selected Essays*, p. 32.

<sup>9</sup>*Selected Essays*, p. 13.

and Khiva and Khokand, for the book was none other than Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. "In proud Bokhara's groves," the boy's fancy had wandered, beside fabulous Amu-Darya, whose waters spring from the "Dark Mountains," which,

. . . lending to the Caspian half its strength,  
In the cold Lake of Eagles sinks at length.<sup>10</sup>

In the year 1865 there was founded in New York that excellent journal of liberal opinion *The Nation*, and Schuyler, now a rising young lawyer, was on its staff.<sup>11</sup> The first identifiable pronouncement from his pen was a well-reasoned and strongly worded survey, in the issue of April 19, 1866, dealing with "The Progress of Russia in Asia."<sup>12</sup>

Tashkent interested Schuyler more than any other single point, for it was, as he saw it, "the key of Central Asia." "Its possession by Russia," he prophesied, "will not only develop the resources of the Syr-Darya, but will greatly stimulate trade," and this will "henceforth pass through Russia rather than through Turkey or India." "Bokhara, another large trading city," he went on, "is likely to follow the fate of Tashkent, and the Russian occupation to extend to the Oxus [the previously mentioned Amu-Darya.]" Finally, "From Khokand to Peshawar in India is but a thousand miles at most."<sup>13</sup>

As to the position of his own country in the great checker game which he saw being played in Central Asia, Schuyler saw nothing to fear. ". . . it has," he declared, "of all the countries the least to fear from the aggrandizement of its mighty neighbor, and is absolutely free from the jealousy of competition; . . ."<sup>14</sup>

This was Schuyler's earliest statement as to the future rôle of what he called "that rectangular patch on our maps . . . with the Sea of Aral in its center," which he was later to visit at least twice, and of which he was to write an exhaustive study in the two great volumes of his *Notes on a Journey to Turkistan*.<sup>15</sup>

Schuyler did well at the law in New York, but in the summer of 1867 began to weary for distant places, and to satisfy his longing, he ap-

<sup>10</sup>*Lalla Rookh*, 1817 ed., p. 21.

<sup>11</sup>Schuyler's first article in *The Nation* was one published in the 9th number, August 31, 1865. We know this from an obituary notice in *The Nation*, Vol. 51, July 24, 1890, p. 73. We do not have any way of knowing which article this was.

<sup>12</sup>*The Nation*, Vol. 2, Apr. 19, 1866, pp. 488-490.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 490.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup>For a list of Schuyler's writings on Russia, see pp. 47-48.



plied for the post of Consul in Moscow. He had no trouble in getting the position, and in early September sailed for Russia. Spring (1868) found him using the period of his very first leave to pay a visit to the alluring "rectangular patch."

Schuyler travelled most of the way in this unfamiliar region by *tarantass*, a rude, box-like combination cart and sledge which may be drawn by either horses or camels and which was in his day the sole practical means of getting about, once the Urals had been crossed. That Schuyler, despite the discomfort and hardships of the journey, found all the wonder and excitement, all the novelty and beauty in the scene that he expected, we know from his letters and published articles. No hardship could rob the region of its poetry, no suffering spoil his delight. Passages like the following occur often in Schuyler's reports:

One night the air, the silence, and the space were so beautiful that I could not sleep, but rode all night on the box, gazing away into the twilight left in the west, which changed around to the north and then to the east, to turn into the bright red of morning.<sup>16</sup>

Yet his notes are not only poetic, but encyclopedic, his observations keen, precise, and illuminating.

In a poem of the east by James Elroy Flecker (*Hassan*), there is a passage near the end in which the minstrel Ishal says of the merchants who are about to set forth across the desert for Samarkand:

We travel not for trafficking alone,  
By hotter winds our fiery hearts are fanned,  
For lust of knowing what should not be known  
We take the Golden Road to Samarkand.

Something of this emotion Schuyler also must have felt, else he would never have been able to put himself through the sheer and protracted agony of his second, great visit to Central Asia, made in the year 1873. A classmate, writing of Schuyler in *The Nation* after his death,<sup>17</sup> expressed astonishment and wonder that one who, as a student in Yale, had had to be shielded from his companions and protected from their roughhouse, who had taken female parts in the Yale show each year and "looked the part to perfection," could undergo the physical privations Schuyler must have endured in order to carry through his great purpose in Turkistan.

"In all my journeyings I never mounted my horse in the morning

<sup>16</sup>"On the Steppe," *Hours at Home*, New York, Vol. 9, Aug. 1869, p. 329.

<sup>17</sup>James M. Hubbard, in *The Nation*, Vol. 51, Sept. 4, 1880, p. 190.

without a shudder of terror,"<sup>18</sup> Schuyler admitted to this classmate. Yet it was precisely at the moment of Turkistan's most unsettled and most violent epoch that he made the above mentioned journey. "The bravest man I have ever known,"<sup>19</sup> was the classmate's final verdict on Schuyler. Or was he, rather, the most inquiring and strong-willed?

Schuyler made his second journey to Central Asia partly in the company of the bold and crusading correspondent of the *Daily Herald*, Januarius MacGahan. The steppe was aflame as they set out, for the Russian conquest was but half finished and the various tribes were in a murderous mood. "People here seem to think I have done a great thing in going to Central Asia, and more especially in coming back again," Schuyler wrote his sister on his return to St. Petersburg. "I don't know exactly how I have changed," he added, "but somehow I seem no longer to be the same, even to myself. Without being more serious, I feel myself so. Probably I am not yet *orienté* to St. Petersburg life, but here all but two or three bore me dreadfully, and I don't know what to do with myself. With people who are interested in Central Asia I can talk with more pleasure. You see it is my present hobby that I am riding to death."<sup>20</sup>

While Schuyler had been in Turkistan, our Minister in St. Petersburg, a Mr. Orr, passed away. In 1869 Schuyler had been transferred from Moscow to the capital and elevated to the rank of Secretary of Legation. Now, with the arrival of the new Minister, Marshall Jewell, he found himself obliged to carry on, in addition to his own duties, those also of the *Chargé d'Affaires*, for Jewell, who had previously been Governor of Connecticut and knew nothing about Russia, had to have someone he could trust in this office. Unlike some of our officials in Russia, Jewell was keenly sensitive to his own shortcomings, and disarmed Schuyler by his modesty. The latter helped his chief in every possible way, filling in the gaps with his encyclopedic knowledge and sympathetic understanding of the country. Jewell did not stay long, and with his departure the whole burden of the legation fell on Schuyler's shoulders. This greatly delayed the preparation of his work on Turkistan, which was not completed until three years after the trip had been made, when Schuyler was enjoying the comparative leisure of a consular post in Constantinople.

With respect to this post, it has been alleged by some that Schuy-

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>*Selected Essays*, p. 50.

ler's transfer from St. Petersburg to the Bosphorus was engineered by the Russian government, which was displeased by certain revelations of maladministration in Russian Turkistan made by Schuyler in a paper that was circularized prematurely. The charge is not founded on fact.<sup>21</sup> It is true that Schuyler did uncover serious shortcomings and abuses in the Russian administration of the newly acquired lands. But it is also true that the Government, from the Tsar down, together with all the enlightened portion of the press, far from condemning Schuyler for his revelations, actually praised him, and far from protesting, congratulated him. They were well aware that, as Schuyler himself stated in the above-mentioned *Turkistan*, this unusual diplomat loved Russia far too sincerely to conceal the truth, and respected her too much not to say straight out what he believed to be wrong, so that it might be corrected.

As Russia in Asia was the first line along which the course of Schuyler's Russian explorations proceeded, so the issue raised by the Emancipation of the serfs in 1861 and of our own slaves in 1863 may be said to have been the second. Because of our own Emancipation, there existed in the '60's a good deal of interest in Russia, and a considerable desire on the part of Americans to find out in what respects Russian life resembled our own, in what ways it was different. Thus *The Catholic World* speaks of Russia as a country "toward which Americans are, whether rightly or wrongly, especially attracted."<sup>22</sup> And *The Nation* refers to the "not very intelligent love for things Russian that is, or was, common among us."<sup>23</sup> Most of the "love" and "attraction" had their origins in the two experiments in emancipation.

Through a reference found in an article by the famous Talvj, the issue of serfdom and its cure became linked in American minds with the writings of Turgenev.<sup>24</sup> Thus it is not surprising that when Schuyler came to the point, as he soon did after 1863, of wishing to read something in the Russian original and possibly to translate it, he should turn to this novelist rather than any other. Turgenev was having a great vogue in France; his outstanding work—*Fathers and Sons*—was the most discussed novel by far in Russia; what more natural than that Schuyler should turn to this for his first venture in translation.

<sup>21</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>22</sup>*The Catholic World*, Vol. 5, Aug. 1867, p. 718.

<sup>23</sup>*The Nation*, Vol. 6, Apr. 16, 1868, p. 313.

<sup>24</sup>*North American Review*, Vol. 82, Apr. 1856, pp. 293-318.

There was a great interest among American publishers at this time in foreign classics, and keen competition in introducing these to the American public. Firms that today are forgotten were the first to pioneer in this respect, but by the '60's Lippincott and Holt and Scribner were also beginning to introduce foreign novels to their annual lists. Schuyler had no trouble in interesting Scribners in his Turgenev project,—Charles Scribner, the founder of the firm, was his mother's half-brother,—and accordingly we find him in the spring of 1867 writing *finis* to an introduction to the first translation of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* to be published either in this country or in England. "As a picture of Russian life and institutions, it of course possesses more value than any work yet published in America," the publisher declared proudly, in his announcement of "Seasonable New Books."<sup>25</sup>

Most reviewers, in taking up Schuyler's translation, viewed it as a "curiosity." *The Catholic World* called it, from the artistic point of view, "a very good novel indeed."<sup>26</sup> So did *The Nation*. *The American Literary Gazette* (parent of *The Publishers Weekly*),<sup>27</sup> in its issue of June 15th, 1867, completely mis-read a statement by Schuyler in the introduction and declared the same novel had been translated before, some thirteen years earlier, when, of course, it was written only in 1861.

As to the merits of Schuyler's translation, there was wide disagreement. *The Nation* thought Mr. Schuyler should "allow himself a little more freedom of expression. His first pages, very noticeably his first sentences, are forbiddingly stiff, but as he goes on this fault in great part, indeed almost wholly, disappears." Hope was expressed by the same reviewer that "in the next edition the correct pronunciation of Russian names will be given. . . . We say in the next edition, because we are pretty confident that Turgenev will go upon our shelves along with Ruffini, Auerbach, d'Azeglio, and other foreign novelists of our day who, having been naturalized, have become favorites among us."<sup>28</sup>

In *The New Englander* Schuyler's translation was called "in general remarkably well executed. The diction is simple, flowing, and thoroughly English. We can recall no translation of a German novel

<sup>25</sup>Opposite the title page of Schuyler's translation.

<sup>26</sup>*The Catholic World*, Vol. 5, Aug. 1867, p. 718.

<sup>27</sup>This journal took notice of *Fathers and Sons* not once but twice: on May 15th, 1867, p. 42; and on June 15th, p. 105.

<sup>28</sup>*The Nation*, Vol. IV, June 13, 1867, p. 472.

which is so successfully done, and the difficulties encountered and overcome by Mr. Schuyler we are assured, were formidable in no slight degree."<sup>29</sup>

Charles Eliot Norton, reviewing the work in *The North American Review*, also described it as "on the whole very well executed," adding that, "in great part, as the story advances, it reads almost with the freedom and idiomatic raciness of an original work."<sup>30</sup>

In *The Nation*, a number of years later, a contrary opinion was to be expressed in no uncertain terms. "While the French have altered the form," lamented Clara B. Martin in a letter to the editor, "Mr. Schuyler has falsified the tone, the atmosphere."

The whole book is belittled and "vulgarized" by the ignoble touch. Imagine a great drama played with all the perfection and grace of the Français, and then put it into the hands of the stock company of one of our second-best theatres, and the difference is not greater than between Turgeneff's *Fathers and Sons* and Mr. Schuyler's. The baldest literal translation of the scene in Bazaroff's death-chamber would be ample proof of the justice of this criticism.<sup>31</sup>

There was much justification for Miss Martin's blast. Schuyler, as we know, hated nothing so much as what, in others, he called bombast. Nearly every author he had occasion to review, on no matter what subject, and no matter how highly placed in the literary or scholarly hierarchy he might be, was found by Schuyler to be guilty of indulging in this.<sup>32</sup> In his own writings it was the one thing Schuyler shied away from as from the plague. At first, in his translation, he undoubtedly carried this to excess, so that his style in the beginning had a pinched quality. There is no question but that this is the case in the early part of *Fathers and Sons*.

On the title page of his translation, and also, by implication, in his introduction to the Turgenev novel, Schuyler gave it out that he had made his translation, "with the approval of the author . . . from the Russian." It was not long before this claim was challenged. In its issue of September 7th, 1867, the London *Saturday Review*<sup>33</sup> stated flatly that it was a piece of "literary bad faith" on Schuyler's part to make any such claim. The translation had been made, the

<sup>29</sup>*The New Englander and Yale Review*, Vol. 26, July 1867, p. 592.

<sup>30</sup>*North American Review*, Vol. 105, July 1867, pp. 328-329.

<sup>31</sup>*The Nation*, Vol. 26, May 16, 1878, p. 322. R. A. Gettmann, in his *Turgenev in England and America*, Urbana, 1937, missed this article.

<sup>32</sup>For statements of his against bombast, see *The North American Review*, Vol. 98, Mar. 1864, p. 582; and Vol. 99, Oct. 1864, p. 611.

<sup>33</sup>*Saturday Review*, Vol. 24, pp. 322-323.



journal declared, from a French version published in 1863 under the title *Pères et Enfants*.

This was a grave charge, and one which Schuyler felt obliged to answer, the more so as it was widely repeated in other literary journals, not only in England but also over here. Writing in *The Nation* for December 19, 1867,<sup>34</sup> Schuyler (who was now in Moscow) stated that most of the work was done, as he had said, from the Russian, but that "owing to press of time, some of the last chapters were translated directly from the French." As Turgenev himself had done the French version, Schuyler went on to say, this did not seem so serious, and anyway, the parts which were done from the French "were afterward more or less carefully compared with and corrected by the Russian."<sup>35</sup>

Comparing the two versions, the French and Schuyler's English, one is forced to agree with the *Saturday Review's* impression: that the translation was made, in great part, not from the Russian but from the French. There are all sorts of evidences—place names, notes, and the style as a whole. It was probably a good while after 1867 before Eugene Schuyler was fully competent to translate a great work from the Russian directly, without an intermediary aid in French or German.<sup>36</sup>

On his way to Russia in the autumn of 1867, Schuyler met Turgenev in person. Whether the meeting occurred under the famous "Russian tree", or at one of the morning picnics which Turgenev himself satirizes so devastatingly in *Smoke*, we do not know, but they had a long conversation at any rate. Turgenev told Schuyler that in Russia the one literary figure he must look up was Tolstoy. A translation of Tolstoy's *Childhood and Youth* had been issued in London in 1862, but the work had fallen flat, and Tolstoy was so far a complete unknown in England and America. Turgenev advised Schuyler, if he wished to translate further, to try his hand at Tolstoy's *The Cossacks*, "the finest and most perfect product of Russian literature,"<sup>37</sup> as he called it.

Schuyler did not at once follow Turgenev's advice in the matter of which work of Tolstoy to start with, but began working on some

<sup>34</sup>*The Nation*, Dec. 19, 1867, p. 496.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup>The issue of the "double translation" was again raised in connection with Schuyler's translation in *The Nation*, Vol. 40, Feb. 5, 1885, p. 116. For Isabel Hapgood on the "double translation," see *The Nation*, Vol. 42, Mar. 25, 1886, pp. 259-260.

<sup>37</sup>*Selected Essays*, p. 254.

of the sketches of the Crimean War. Later, however, after his meeting with Tolstoy himself at Yasnaya Polyana, he abandoned the war sketches to work in earnest on *The Cossacks*. "Changes of position and varied duties,"<sup>38</sup> prevented his finishing the translation for fully ten years, however, and it was not until a long sea voyage gave him the necessary leisure that he finally completed it. The translation was published by Scribners in 1878, so far as we can determine the very first of Tolstoy's works to be issued in translation on this side of the Atlantic.

*The Cossacks* had no such success as Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* had enjoyed, and did nothing to advance the reputation of either Tolstoy or his translator. To most Americans reviewing it, the tale seemed wooden and contrived, and totally lacking, as they put it, in the wonderful "dramatic quality"<sup>39</sup> they had discerned in Turgenev.

Schuyler was not the first American representative in Russia to arrive there with some knowledge of the Russian language and with a desire to learn more of it. Preceding him by a good three years, had been the previously mentioned Jeremiah Curtin, who also knew the language.

There were never in all the world two men less equipped to get along harmoniously with each other than Schuyler and Curtin, and it is no wonder they quickly ran afoul of each other. Schuyler viewed Curtin as an irresponsible "drunk."<sup>40</sup> Curtin looked upon Schuyler as a prig and worse, charging him with responsibility for the discharge of a friend of his from Vermont who had for twenty years served his country well in the consular post at Odessa.<sup>41</sup> There is much to say on both sides. Curtin was rough-and-ready, genial, and probably not too careful about paying his bills, especially if the borrowed money were spent for books, which he could not resist. Schuyler undoubtedly did have something to do with getting Timothy Smith fired. As we know from a letter to the historian George Bancroft, he wanted the post for himself.<sup>42</sup> But the real reason for the failure of the two to get along was the inner and essential make-up of the two. Their two natures were mutually hostile and irreconcilable, and whatever either says of the other must be taken with a large grain of salt.

<sup>38</sup>Introduction to Schuyler's translation of *The Cossacks*.

<sup>39</sup>*The Nation*, Vol. 27, Aug. 29, 1878, pp. 134-135.

<sup>40</sup>*The Life of Cassius M. Clay* (by himself), 1886, Vol. 1, p. 587.

<sup>41</sup>Curtin, *Memoirs*, p. 293.

<sup>42</sup>See among the Bancroft Papers in the Manuscript Room of the NYPL.

Curtin, for example, was interested in folklore and in the people themselves from whom it sprang. Schuyler was a scholar and somewhat professorial in type. Almost from the moment of his arrival in Moscow—and later in St. Petersburg—he was a frequent guest in the great salons, and thoroughly at home in the company of the leading scholars. He was himself an aristocrat by birth, on both sides, his father being of the up-state New York Dutch planter-aristocracy, his mother of the New England landowning caste. In Russia Schuyler simply gravitated to "his own." Curtin, on the other hand, was from the uncouth west, and there was something of the shaggy frontiersman about him. Each had his place, but it was not in the company of the other!

Quite early in his sojourn in Russia, Schuyler was asked by the above-mentioned Bancroft, then serving as our Minister in Berlin, to do some research in the Archives of Russia and, in the event that he found interesting Americana, to copy certain manuscripts. This Schuyler did, gaining easy access to the Archives through his friendship with Prince Michael Obolensky, who was in charge of this department of the government in Moscow. It is thanks to his painstaking labors that many a document on our relations with Russia in the time of Catherine, is accessible to scholars today at the New York Public Library among the Bancroft Papers.<sup>43</sup>

From his association with Russian professors, especially from his meeting with the historian Alexander Brückner, in Odessa, when he visited that city for the first time in 1869, Schuyler became interested in the never-to-be-solved yet ever fascinating riddle of Russia's relations with Europe. Brückner was deeply involved in this question, of course, and at the time of Schuyler's visit, already hard at work on the biography of the man whose name we think of as being responsible, more than any other, for the Europeanization, as Brückner called it, of Russia—Peter the Great. Schuyler could not resist tackling the problem himself, and soon we find him collecting materials and impressions for a second work of monumental proportions, a biography of Peter which should be worthy to stand beside his two-volume *Turkistan*.

A great impulse to the writing of his *Peter the Great* was given Schuyler by the celebration in 1872 of the 200th anniversary of Peter's birth. The event brought into the open many items long forgotten or at least neglected, and caused the whole issue of Peter's

<sup>43</sup>Schuyler later wrote a long article on "American Historical Manuscripts in Foreign Archives," for *The Nation*, Vol. 48, Mar. 14, 1889, pp. 219-222.

rôle in Russian history to be thoroughly aired. We see Schuyler's growing interest and absorption in Peter reflected in his dispatches to the *Athenaeum* (London). In his letters from June 29, 1872 on, there is for several times nothing at all but news of Peter-research.

Schuyler published his *Peter the Great* in serial form at first, in *Scribner's Monthly* beginning with the issue of January, 1880. It ran for more than a year, magnificently illustrated by Vereshchagin's and others' illustrations. Interesting to us today, still fascinated as we are by the problem of Peter, is Schuyler's final appraisal of the great monarch's contribution to Russian and world history:

One blame may, we think, be rightly attached to Peter: that he brought Russia prematurely into the circle of European politics. As to the effect upon Europe, contemporary national rivalries hinder a fair conclusion. As to that upon Russia, there can be but one opinion. The result has been to turn the Rulers [sic] of Russia away from home affairs and the regular development of internal institutions to foreign politics and the creation of a great military power. In this sense it cannot be deemed beneficial to Russia.<sup>44</sup>

If the articles written by Schuyler on Russian life and customs were gathered together and published in book form, they would make a good-sized volume, and a good antidote, it may be added, to the lurid sensationalism that was fed the American people with respect to Russia in Schuyler's period by journalists like George Augustus Sala and Gurowski.

Schuyler wrote his sketches of Russian life as part of the process of acclimatizing himself to his new surroundings. When he first arrived in Russia, we find him struggling against an almost overwhelming sense of loneliness. Everything was so different, especially so huge. In his letters to his mother he describes his living quarters down to the minutest detail, drawing diagrams to show where each piece of furniture was placed.<sup>45</sup> We have the feeling he is trying desperately to make a nest for himself, seeking, at heroic pains, to tame somewhat the void that he feels about him, if only this tiny part of it that is his lodging.

The loneliness did not last long. Soon Russia opened her arms to him and took him to her heart. Before many weeks, he had ceased to feel a stranger and was responding to the affection shown him with a love that was to prove deep and abiding. Being unmarried in the years of his Russian residence, Schuyler was able to make the new

<sup>44</sup>*Peter the Great: A Study of Historical Biography*, 2 vols., New York, Scribners, 1884, Vol. 2, p. 511.

<sup>45</sup>*Selected Essays*, p. 21.

country and its people in a sense his wife. While he often wrote of this wife critically, it was always sympathetically, and from within the family circle, never as an observer standing apart and surveying.

Schuyler's sister remarks in her *Memoir*, "an occasional coldness of manner" in her brother, which, she says, "was at times even repellent."<sup>46</sup> In his writings on Russian life we find little of this coldness. "If Schuyler is taken up with dry bones, you become intensely interested in dry bones yourself," a friend wrote of him, "and you are ready to believe that you have cared for nothing else in your whole life."<sup>47</sup>

That is the way one feels in reading the Russian essays,<sup>48</sup>—the one on the peasant, another on the universities, on a Russian Easter, or a funeral in Russia—completely under the author's spell and moved by his conviction that here is something worth reading about, whether the subject be the Slovak tin peddler who ranges the Moscow street below his window, or one of those mammoth Russian dinners he describes with such infinite detail.

Had Schuyler not possessed the wandering foot, he would have made a great scholar, and if he had but lived, it is altogether likely that the last chapter of his career would have seen him in some high professorial post. For he was a great seeker after truth. Januarius MacGahan, in speaking of Schuyler's work on the commission sent out to investigate the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria, remarked, "Mr. Schuyler explored these dark depths to the bottom with the coolness of a surgeon probing a foul and festering ulcer."<sup>49</sup> Of his method of getting at a problem, Schuyler himself observes, "I have . . . I trust, followed no authority blindly. I have never accepted a statement without inquiry and comparison with the results of others; and if I sometimes state things which seem opposed to all that has been written or printed before, . . . it has not been without good authority."<sup>50</sup>

Schuyler died at fifty, in the very prime of life and at a moment when it seemed his preparatory period was about to give way to a period of fulfillment. A wonderful second life seemed awaiting him. But that life he was destined to be denied.

Schuyler's splendid library, built up in the years of his Russian

<sup>46</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>47</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>48</sup>See the list on pp. 47-48.

<sup>49</sup>MacGahan, *Turkish Atrocities*, 1876, p. 47.

<sup>50</sup>Introduction to *Turkistan*, p. vi.



sojourn, awaits some other scholar's use at Cornell University, to which he himself presented it in 1885. As we scan the items listed in this collection, we find it richest of all in folklore, Russian in particular, but also General Slavonic. Four lines of interest were pursued by Schuyler in his Russian studies, as we have seen: Russia and Asia, Russia and freedom, Russia and Europe, and finally Russia herself, her manners and customs. Here was a fifth field which he evidently yearned and intended to pursue: the field of folklore. Perhaps another scholar is waiting at this moment to do so for him, using for this purpose the volumes Eugene Schuyler collected with such pleasure and discrimination.

## EUGENE SCHUYLER'S WRITINGS ON RUSSIA

1866

"The Progress of Russia in Asia," *Nation*, No. 42, Vol. 2, Apr. 19, 1866, pp. 488-490.

1867

A translation of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*, New York, Scribners, summer of 1867.

1869

"Diners à la Russe," *Nation*, Vol. 8, Jan. 7, 1869, pp. 7-9.

"The Russian Peasant," *Hours at Home*, Vol. 9, May, 1869, pp. 14-22.

"On the Steppe," *Hours at Home*, Vol. 9, Aug. 1869, pp. 319-329.

"A Russian Exile on Russia," *Nation*, Vol. 9, Sept. 30, 1869, pp. 271-273. A review of a work by Turgenev.

"Russian Universities," *Nation*, Vol. 9, Nov. 4, 1869, pp. 384-386.

1870

"Modern Russia," *Nation*, Vol. 10, Mar. 10, 1870, pp. 161-162.

"Friday in Russia," *Athenaeum*, No. 2211, Mar. 12, 1870, pp. 356-357.

"The Municipal Reform in Russia," *Nation*, Vol. 11, Dec. 1, 1870, pp. 364-365.

1871

"Russian Literature," *Athenaeum*, No. 2257, Jan. 28, 1871, pp. 113-114.

"Russia," *Athenaeum*, No. 2296, Oct. 28, 1871, p. 561.

"An Elopement in Moscow," *Scribner's Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 3, Dec. 1871, pp. 231-234.

1872

"A Russian Easter," *Scribner's Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 3, April, 1872, pp. 681-687.

"Our Russian Letter," *Athenaeum*, No. 2331, June 29, 1872, p. 815.

"Our Russian Letter," *Athenaeum*, No. 2335, July 27, 1872, pp. 113-114.

1876

*Turkistan, Notes of a Journey to Turkistan*, New York, Scribners, 2 vols.

1877

"Out of my Windows at Moscow," *Scribner's Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 13, April, 1877, pp. 821-831.

"A Russian Funeral," *Scribner's Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 14, Sept., 1877, pp. 687-689.

1878

Translation of Tolstoy's *The Cossacks*, New York, Scribners, 1878.

1880

"Peter the Great: A Study of Historical Biography," *Scribner's Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 19, Jan., 1880, pp. 545-564 ff.

1884

The above *Peter the Great* issued in book form, New York, Scribners, 2 vols.

1889

"Count Leo Tolstoy Twenty Years Ago," *Scribner's Magazine* (not the same as above), Vol. 5, May, pp. 537-552, and June, 733-747. Reprinted in Schuyler, *Selected Essays*. Also, translated into Russian and published in *Russkaya Starina*, No. 10, 1890, pp. 268 ff., under the title, "Graf L. N. Tolstoi v ospominaniyakh Yevg. Skailera."

"The Russian Traveller Prjevalsky," *American Geographical Society Bulletin*, Vol. 21, pp. 87-98. Reprinted in Schuyler, *Selected Essays*.

# The Red Army in the Second World War

By A. M. NIKOLAIEFF

THE great offensive of the Red Army in 1943-1945 had no parallel in military history. The offensive started in July 1943, after the Germans had made another attempt (which proved to be the last) to break through the Soviet front in the central sector (Orel-Kursk-Belgorod<sup>1</sup>). The German offensive began on July 5, but was frustrated before it was eight days old. Then, the Red Army, in turn, struck at the German flank of the Orel salient. From that time on, the Soviets advanced continuously for some sixteen months, through October 1944, winning victory upon victory. As a result, the front of the Red Army, at the beginning of 1945, extended for over a thousand miles from the Baltic sea (near Memel) around Warsaw and Budapest to the Drava river in Yugoslavia. On January 12, following a brief interval of two months and a half, the Soviet offensive was resumed and, three months later, was completed victoriously in Germany. On April 21 the Soviet troops entered Berlin.

Magnificent as the war record of the Red Army in 1943-1945 was, no similar statement may be made with regard to the operations of that army in the campaigns of 1941-1942. The dissimilarity of these two records, despite their performance in the course of one war by the same army, becomes apparent as we survey the military operations of the opponents in the East from the beginning of the hostilities.<sup>2</sup> Prior, however, to offering such a survey, it seems necessary to give a short account of the Red Army's past.

The March (February, according to the Russian calendar) Revo-

<sup>1</sup>Orel about 200 miles, Belgorod about 350 miles, in a straight line, south of Moscow.

<sup>2</sup>It should be noted that, because of the lack of official documents on the campaigns in the East, it was not possible to base the article on any other official source except the daily communiqués of the opponents. These, however, for obvious reasons, were reticent with regard to their reverses and, on the other hand, inclined to exaggerate their successes or announce them before the fact. Still, the reports, though incomplete or overdrawn, offer a fairly accurate general picture of the campaigns.

lution of 1917 put an end to the Imperial Russian Army and, eight months later, with the coming into power of the Soviet régime, the First World War was over as far as Russia was concerned.

Another war broke out in the country, the civil struggle between the White (Anti-Communist) and the Red (Communist) forces, in the course of which a new Russian Army came into being. Its formation was announced on January 28, 1918, by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars, in which it was called the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. It was to replace the Red Guard detachments which had originated in the first days of the Revolution. The Red Army, at first, was recruited on a voluntary basis. But, at the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party in March, the organization of a regular army was decided upon after some discussion. On June 12, 1918, the first mobilization of workers and peasants for the recruiting of the Red Army took place.

From January 1918, to June 1941 (the beginning of the invasion of Russia in the Second World War), more than twenty-three years had gone by. During that period the Red Army fought in three wars, the Civil War, the Polish War, and the Finnish War. Thus, at the beginning of World War II, the Soviet Army was not lacking entirely in war experience. However, the Civil War, because of its peculiar nature, greatly differed from a war against a modern army; in the Polish War, which was successful for the Red Army before it overreached itself in the advance on Warsaw, that army was faced by an adversary whose date of birth was even later than that of its opponent; finally, the Finnish Army, despite its brilliant defense at the beginning of the campaign, was unable to offer resistance for a long time to the pressure of numerous Soviet forces. It may be seen, therefore, that before Russia was invaded in the Second World War, the Red Army had not fought against a great power's modern army.<sup>1</sup>

Before we speak of the Red Army's effort in the Second World War, we must take notice of an important circumstance: the Soviet military authorities did not miss taking advantage of the hard lesson which the old Russian Army had lived through in the First World War owing to an inadequate supply of munitions for a long war. The Soviets had built an army which was superior to the old army not only in numerical strength but also in the enormous stock of armament and ammunition stored in anticipation of a war. To what an

<sup>1</sup>There was some fighting between the Red Army and the Japanese Army in the Far East in 1935-36 but only small fractions of the armies of the two opponents took part in those "border incidents" in Mongolia and Manchuria.

extent the Red Army was well armed and supplied at the beginning of the war, may be judged from the statement made by Hitler during the war. He said that the Soviet preparedness had been greatly underestimated by the German military intelligence. This, despite the fact that the Red Army was generally regarded before the war as a gigantic military machine, and the Germans should have known its strength better than anybody else since they planned to attack Russia.

Possibly, because the Red Army was so well armed, equipped, and provided with ammunition, and also because the political situation (following the overrunning of Poland) was considered uncertain, the Soviet plan of campaign (as it was disclosed in the course of the operations) was fundamentally different from the old Russian Army's plan of campaign in 1914. It is well known that the slowness of the Russian mobilization had made it imperative that the concentration of the army be carried out in a safe area, that is, at some distance from the frontier, thus leaving a part of the territory in the western borderland open to enemy invasion. The Russian invasion of East Prussia in August 1914, undertaken before the completion of the concentration of the Russian armies facing Germany, was an exception resulting from a decision to make a sacrifice in order to help the hard-pressed Allies on the Western front.

Unlike the old Russian Army in World War I, the Red Army in 1941 was stationed in the immediate vicinity of the frontier. As soon as war began, both sides became engaged all along the frontier, approximately from Shavli in Lithuania through Grodno, Bialystok, Brest-Litovsk to the Prut River in Bessarabia. Out of some of the many engagements in the first days, a major battle, a battle of masses developed in the central sector of the 600-mile long front. In this sector, German armies from Grodno on the north and from Brest-Litovsk on the south advanced in a converging drive toward a point between Bialystok and Minsk.

As early as June 29, that is, on the eighth day of the war, the Germans announced that they had surrounded two Russian armies and the ring of the German armies was "drawing closer and closer hour after hour." On July 10 (the nineteenth day of the war), the Germans reported the conclusion of the "double battle of Bialystok and Minsk," the latter city having fallen on July 1. In the same communiqué the following figures of prisoners taken and materiel captured and destroyed were given: 323, 898 prisoners, including several commanding generals and divisional commanders, 7,615 tanks,



4,423 guns and 6,233 planes. The Soviet communiqués reported "fierce fighting" in the direction of Minsk and Baranovichi in the last days of June and fighting in various directions (Ostrov, Polotsk, Noograd-Volynski) in the first week of July, but gave no details. However, the figures of the German communiqué given above, as well as the names of a number of cities which had fallen into the German hands by that time (Grodno, Brest-Litovsk, Kaunas, Vilno, Minsk, and others), proved beyond any doubt that a battle had taken place (June 22-July 10), in the immediate neighborhood of the new Soviet-German frontier, and that a large part of the Red Army, stationed in the frontier area, had suffered a heavy reverse.

The question arises why were the Red armed forces massed in the immediate vicinity of the frontier. It seems that one of two explanations may be given. Either an offensive had been planned by the Soviets in the near future, or else, anticipating the necessity of a defense against a sudden attack, they kept the groupings of their armies close to the frontier line. General Jodl testified before the International Tribunal at Nuremberg,<sup>4</sup> that "Hitler had decided to attack Russia in 1941 because Russia had massed troops on the German border and Hitler feared that she was waiting only for an Allied attack before abandoning her neutrality." The German general further said that "Russia had massed 150 divisions on the German border after the occupation of Poland" and that "Hitler had received information that she intended to seize Rumanian oil fields at the first opportunity."

Although the number of the Soviet divisions on the border mentioned by the German General may be an exaggeration, it was, unquestionably, very large. Even the Soviet writers estimate it at more than 110. At any rate, the figures of prisoners and materiel captured in the battle speak for themselves. And these were only a part of the Red forces assembled on the frontier, inasmuch as the Germans, contrary to their expectations during the battle, did not succeed in closing their "huge pincers," and a large part, probably larger than the number of prisoners taken, escaped eastward, toward Smolensk.

Another possible explanation of the massing of the Soviet forces on the border may have been, as already suggested, an anticipation of a sudden German attack. However, a decision to prepare for defense by massing troops on the frontier, with no sufficient reserves to reinforce them at the moment of need, that is, exposing them to

<sup>4</sup>*The New York Times*, June 6, 1946, Assoc. Press dispatch, Nuremberg, June 5.

attack before knowing where the enemy intended to strike, would be a grave strategical blunder. Such a disposition of troops would be equivalent to inviting disaster. As a matter of fact, what happened to the Red Army in the June-July days of 1941 was a disaster.

In the early thirties, the Soviets started building the so-called Stalin line, the Russian equivalent of the French Maginot line and the German Siegfried line. The Stalin line was a system of fortifications in a wide area near the old (pre-1939) Russian frontier extending from the Gulf of Finland to the Black Sea. It ran approximately beyond the upper Dvina and the Dnieper and included many well-equipped strongholds in fortified towns such as Polotsk, Vitebsk, Orsha, Mogilev, and outside of them. During the German-Polish War the Soviet Union had annexed a large area made up of Eastern Poland and the Baltic states, which formed, as it were, a buffer territory between the old Soviet frontier and Germany. Regardless of whether offense or defense had been anticipated by the Soviet plan of campaign, the massing of troops in the buffer territory clearly shows that a decision in case of war was expected in or near the buffer area; at any rate not in the rear, but in front of the Stalin line. It seems equally clear that no defense in depth had been foreseen in the Soviet plan for the simple reason that for that kind of defense no massing of troops on the border would be necessary. Just the opposite way of action would be dictated by strategical considerations, namely, economical use of forces by taking advantage of fortifications, with a view to offering decisive resistance not before the enemy would become exhausted as a result of his efforts to pierce the fortified zones. At the same time, it would be of the highest importance to oppose a rapid penetration of the enemy motorized and armored divisions by mobile reserves of mechanized units.

Military critics, as they reviewed the initial phase of the war on the Eastern front, expressed the opinion that Soviet troops were not familiar with the new armament and equipment they had to use, and that their training in general left much to be desired. Especially, Soviet generals of revolutionary and civil-war fame, to whom higher posts had been entrusted, were lacking in the knowledge of modern methods of warfare and of the principles of military science in general.

As the invaders advanced into the interior of Russia, a series of other reverses were suffered by the Red Army. On July 12, the Germans announced that the Stalin line had been broken "at all decisive points" and that the "center of the attacking front had been

advanced 125 miles east of Minsk" which was a penetration of some 300 miles in the direction of Moscow. It was further announced that, to the south, the Dniester river had been forced on a broad front and that the German troops stood "close before Kiev," while, to the north, "east of lake Peipus," panzer units had "advanced toward Leningrad." Six days later it was reported that the city of Smolensk (the "gateway to Moscow," only 230 miles from the capital) had been taken on July 16.

However, the taking of Smolensk meant only the beginning of the battle named after that city. The end of the battle which was fought in a wide area (some 150 by 95 miles) with center points at Smolensk, Vitebsk, Nevel, and Mogilev, was announced on August 6. Boasting of their victory, the invaders paid tribute to the fighting qualities of the Russian soldiers calling them an "extremely tough and bitterly fighting opponent." Attempts at retaking Smolensk were made even after August 6. Nevertheless, the number of prisoners taken and the amount of booty captured and destroyed were very large. The total number of prisoners taken by the three German groups of armies as of August 6, 1941, was 895,000, including 310,000 taken in the battle of Smolensk; the figures for tanks, guns, and planes respectively were: 13,145, 10,388, 9,082.

Following Smolensk, the next major objective of the Germans was Moscow. The offensive against the capital started on or about October 2, 1941, and it led to a battle which was called by the Germans the "double battle of Briansk and Viazma." The battle lasted about seventeen days, its end having been announced by the Germans on October 18. By the time the battle started, a very considerable progress had been made by the German groups of armies advancing, one south and the other north of the central group of armies pushing eastward from Smolensk to Moscow.

In the south, as a result of the battle south of Uman about August 18, shortly followed by the battle of Gomel, the entire territory west of the Dnieper was occupied, Odessa was encircled, the city of Kiev fell into German hands, and Crimea was cut off. In the north, after occupying the Russian cities of Pskov, Narva, and Novgorod, the Germans besieged Leningrad in September, bringing that city and its harbor, Kronstadt, under the fire of heavy batteries.

Thus, by the end of the third month of war, the Eastern front presented a picture of continuous German conquest. The Soviets had lost, next to all borderlands from Bessarabia to Estonia, important industrial and farming regions in White Russia and Ukraine,

the region adjoining the Baltic countries, and the ports on the Baltic, as well as the more important ones on the Black Sea.

The result of the battle of Briansk-Viazma was for the Soviets another stupendous loss, namely 659,948 prisoners along with 1,241 tanks and 5,396 guns captured or destroyed. Briansk and Viazma, two important communications centers, some 200 miles southwest and 130 miles west of Moscow respectively, were in German hands. The invaders, at the end of the battle, pushed the advance units as far as the cities and towns (or their suburbs) of Orel, Kaluga, Mozhaisk, Rzhev, Kalinin (Tver); Mozhaisk, a point only 65 miles from Moscow.

Though the number of prisoners and the amount of captured booty in the "gigantic double battle" were without parallel in military history, this victory, contrary to German statements, did not result in complete encirclement and annihilation of the enemy forces and was not, therefore, decisive. The main aim of the offensive had not been achieved.

The effects of the ordeal through which the Soviet Union lived during the first year of the war might have been disastrous, if it had not been for the generous support both moral and material, given by the Allies, especially the United States, from the beginning of the war. This support was of vital importance, inasmuch as the Soviets had lost all their key war industries through German occupation and had to reestablish them in provinces east of the Volga by building new plants from the ground up. In an equally hard position was the country with regard to its food supply and resources. Thanks to American and British efforts, huge quantities of armament, equipment, and supplies were shipped to Archangel and later, by the Persian Gulf, Iran route, with its "tremendous railway facilities" built across a desert, with the only aim to feed war supplies to the Soviet troops.

After the battle of Briansk-Viazma the Germans appeared exhausted. According to General Marshall they believed, however, that "one last energetic push would be sufficient to finish the Soviets."<sup>5</sup> Yet for such a push, in the winter, the German army was not prepared (winter in the Moscow region set in in October). Moreover, the German front in the East was some 900 miles from Berlin. It seems unlikely that the German Command in the East really intended to go on with the offensive without making a stop. But it is

<sup>5</sup>General Marshall's Report, 1945, p. 2.

a fact that the offensive was continued, almost without interruption, and the attack on Moscow took place.

As we go over the official reports of the opposing sides for the time, from October 18, the end of the battle of Viazma, to December 6, the beginning of the counter-offensive by the Soviet army around Moscow, we may divide that time into two periods—one, before November 16, the other, after that date. During the first period, no major action was undertaken by the Germans on the Moscow front; only local attacks were made at certain points (Mozhaishk, Kalinin), and an enveloping movement by German mechanized units started to develop on the Soviet left flank in the direction of Tula-Serpukhov but was not followed up by infantry. No mention of any places captured during that period may be found in the German communiqués. Reports appeared even in the press that the "Battle for Moscow" had turned the corner in favor of the defenders and that the Germans were "digging in."

On November 17, however, the Soviets reported "violent attacks on the Kalinin front" by the enemy and, two days later, a German communiqué announced, somewhat unexpectedly, that "new and successful operations were under way on the Eastern front." Thus, the German war machine which had been stalled for about a month got under way on November 16, set for a general attack on Moscow. The German forces participating in it consisted of fifty-one divisions of which thirty-three were infantry, five motorized infantry, and thirteen tank divisions.<sup>6</sup> The aim of the offensive was to take Klin on the north and Tula on the south in order to "close in from three sides." The highest points reached by the tide of the German attack menacing Moscow were Dmitrov on the north, Zvenigorod on the west, and Kashira on the south; fifty, thirty, and seventy miles from the capital respectively.<sup>7</sup>

Up to December 6, the Soviets conducted "fierce defense battles," but on that date they launched a counter-offensive against the enemy's flanks. The Germans fell back toward their main defense line which approximately ran from Kaluga through Yukhnov, Maloiaroslavets-Mozhaishk-Volokolamsk-Rzhev-Kalinin at the time. The booty claimed by the Soviets as captured or destroyed from November 16 to December 10 was: 71 tanks, 665 trucks, 92 guns, 119 trench mortars, and 131 machine guns. No prisoners taken, how-

<sup>6</sup>Soviet Communiqué of December 12, 1941.

<sup>7</sup>Dispatch by R. Parker, March 7, Moscow, in *The New York Times*, March 10, 1941.



ever, were mentioned. One of the causes of the German failure, according to Soviet writers, was the fact that the Soviet Command succeeded in bringing up fresh strong reinforcements at decisive points.

But, even before the Soviet communiqué reporting the counter-offensive was published, a German communiqué definitely announced (on December 8) that the offensive operations in the East, in 1941, had been given up and only local activities would take place. Thus the winter attack on Moscow ended in complete failure.

Throughout the winter and spring of 1942, the outline of the German front in the East remained, in the main, unchanged, despite the fact that the Soviets conducted continuous active operations by small groups and "partisan" (guerrilla) detachments against various points of the German front and its rear. As a result of those local operations, wedges in certain places, like near Staraia Roussa (in March), had been driven into the enemy lines, and certain strong points, like Mozhaïsk (in January) and Yukhnov, about 115 miles south-west of Moscow, had been recaptured. But, in a general way, the main framework of the German front offered to them the same strategically favorable positions for a spring offensive as those at the end of the offensive against Moscow in 1941 had been.

When the Germans resumed their offensive in 1942 (May 8), now with a view to invading Caucasus, the Red Army continued to suffer setbacks under the enemy's pressure. Before the battle of Stalingrad began, on or about August 23, 1942, the Germans had conducted a major offensive which had lasted for three months (May-August) and may be divided into three main drives: 1st against the Kerch peninsula which ended with the peninsula's occupation; 2nd, in the zone of Kharkov which was a counter-offensive against an apparent Soviet attempt to recapture the city; and 3rd, the advance against the Don crossings (end of June) which achieved a breakthrough between Belgorod and Kursk on July 3 and concluded with the occupation of the entire Don elbow, down to Rostov, on or about August 17.

As a result of that offensive and its continuation, the Germans succeeded in penetrating into the interior of Russia as far as the Volga river and the foothills of the Caucasian mountains, thus adding another vast area to the territory, already invaded since the campaign of 1941. They claimed (August 12) 1,044,741 prisoners and the destruction or seizure of 6,271 tanks, 10,131 guns, and 6,056 planes

since the beginning of the spring offensive.<sup>8</sup> These results were obtained, however, at the cost of heavy losses as the defense of the Soviets had been stubborn and very active; their offensive and counter-offensive in the Kharkov zone, and the heroic defense of Sevastopol, Leningrad, and Voronezh may serve as some of the outstanding proofs.

The most glorious pages of the defensive battles in the Second World War have been unquestionably written into the Red Army's history by its operations in and around Stalingrad, which lasted for some 163 days and resulted in the surrender of the besieging army. This was the fateful high point at which the tide turned. Because of the German defeat at Stalingrad, further attempts at a decisive penetration into the Caucasus, or at outflanking Moscow, were doomed to failure.

Five more months had gone by, and a general Soviet offensive against the invaders, described at the beginning of this article, was started. But the Red Army which started that offensive, after two years of war, was very different from the army which had suffered defeat in 1941-1942.

Of the many factors responsible for the difference between the army of 1941 and that of 1943, unquestionably the most important was of a psychological nature. As the war went on, the entire population was aroused to action and gave its backing to the army. The will to resist and avenge in order to protect families from being massacred and homes from being plundered and burned by the savage and cruel invader was paramount.

Another factor was the gaining of combat experience in proportion to the duration of the operations. But war lessons, offered during the fighting, would be of no avail if army leaders, lacking in military education, were unable to take advantage of such lessons. Obviously, it was, partly, with this purpose in view that, as early as the first year of war, important changes were made in the commanding personnel of the Red Army, along with some significant reforms in its organization. The changes in the personnel consisted in replacing generals appointed to high army posts for political reasons by gen-

<sup>8</sup>It is interesting to compare the figures of destroyed and seized war materiel, as given by the Germans after the first two months of the war, with the figures of the booty destroyed and captured by the Soviets during the first three months of their great offensive. The German figures were: 14,000 tanks, 15,000 guns, 11,250 planes. The Soviet figures were: 17,700 tanks, 19,800 guns, 10,189 planes. There is not much difference between the figures of the two sides though the Soviet data refer to a somewhat longer period.

erals who, in addition to having won distinction in the Civil War, had studied, after that war, in the Red Army's Staff College under the guidance of "specialists," that is, General Staff officers of the old Tsarist Army. Unquestionably, the most important change in that respect was the replacement of the Commanders-in-chief of the fronts (i.e. groups of armies). Of the reforms in the Army, the abolition of the political commissars in October, 1942, should be mentioned in the first place. From that time on, the responsibility for each unit in all respects rested with its military commander who no longer had to share that responsibility with a non-professional member of the Communist Party and obey the latter in case they disagreed. The subjecting of those guilty of breaking discipline to stricter punishments, the reestablishing of officers' ranks from that of lieutenant to the highest one of marshal, the giving back, to the officers and soldiers of their traditional shoulder straps with insignia showing their respective ranks, the reinstating of compulsory saluting and the assigning of orderlies to the officers—all these were important reforms which served to uplift the officers' prestige and bring on closer resemblance between the Red Army and the old Imperial Army. Moreover, with the obvious object of influencing the Army's morale by reviving in its memory the names of two famous troop leaders of the old Russian Army, there were established two decorations for highest military distinction, one of Suvorov and the other of Kutuzov.

Based on the data presented in this article, certain general conclusions can thus be arrived at.

The staggering offensive of the Red Army in 1943 was launched after the war had lasted more than two years. Until that offensive began, the Red Army had suffered a series of reverses and setbacks. Following the disastrous battle on the frontier, the Soviet Command had to resort to defense. Stubborn and very active resistance was offered to the invader, but deep enemy penetration could not be stopped and heavy losses in military forces (estimated at no less than 5,000,000 killed) along with losses in valuable territory, much needed resources and means of production, accompanied the retreat. Under these conditions, the Allied aid to Russia during the war was of vital importance. The tide turned with the victorious defense of Stalingrad.

One and, perhaps, the main cause of the unfavorable course of the campaigns in 1941–1942 was a faulty disposition of troops. The campaign of 1941, it seems, may serve as an added confirmation of the

well-known aphorism that mistakes made in the deployment of troops at the start of the operations affect the course of the entire campaign. In fact, it was only after the war had lasted more than four months and the campaign of 1941 was virtually at an end that the Soviet Command was able to bring up strong reserves with the help of which the enemy's offensive against Moscow was stopped and a counter-offensive could be launched.

The outstanding feature of the Red Army, demonstrated in the Second World War, and which also had characterized the old imperial Army, was its remarkable tenacity and high combat value, both attested by friend and foe. No defeat could break its morale.

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# Osip Mandelstam—the Architect of Words\*

By LEONID I. STRAKHOVSKY

IN THE early autumn of 1910 a young man alighted from a third-class carriage of a train coming from Germany at the Warsaw railway station in St. Petersburg. No one met him; he had no luggage, having lost his only suitcase at the frontier. He wore an Alpine hat on his head, a wide shabby cloak on his sloping shoulders, bright russet shoes in need of polish and well worn at the heels—such was his attire. Over his left arm a checkered steamer rug was draped and in his right hand he held a sandwich. Thus, sandwich in hand, he made his way to the exit. His name was Osip Emilyevich Mandelstam and he was to become the only Jewish member of the acmeist<sup>1</sup> clan. "In the suitcase lost at Eidtkunen there was, besides a toothbrush and a volume of Bergson, a much used notebook the pages of which were covered with verses. But the loss (except for the toothbrush) was not important because Mandelstam knew his verses and Bergson by heart."<sup>2</sup>

The son of an unsuccessful middle-class businessman, Mandelstam was born in Warsaw on January 15, 1891<sup>3</sup>. As a child he was brought to St. Petersburg and grew up in that city. He did not enjoy a happy family life. After completing his secondary education in the Tenishev private school in 1907, he went abroad where he spent some time in Paris. At that time he was much attracted by the poetry of Baudelaire and Verlaine. In 1910 he went abroad again where he spent two terms at the University of Heidelberg in Germany studying old-French and Kantian philosophy. Upon his return to Russia he entered the University of St. Petersburg

\*This is a chapter from Dr. Strakhovsky's forthcoming book: *The Acmeist Poets of Russia*.

<sup>1</sup>The acmeist poets, who dominated Russian poetry in the last decade before the Revolution of 1917, represented a reaction against symbolism. Their leader was Nicholas Gumilev. Cf. *Russian Review*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Autumn 1946.

<sup>2</sup>Georgy Ivanov, *Peterburgskiya zimy*, Paris, 1928, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup>B. Kozmin, *Pisateli sovremennoi epokhi*, I (Moscow, 1928) p. 178; *Literaturnaya Entsiklopediya*, VI (Moscow-Leningrad, 1932) p. 756; I. V. Vladislavlev, *Literatura velikogo desyatiletiya*, I (Moscow-Leningrad, 1928) p. 83.



and joined the literary circles of the capital. From then on his unprepossessing figure was seen more often in bohemian cafés and restaurants, in the editorial rooms of reviews, and at literary gatherings, than in the hallowed halls and auditoriums of the great seat of learning which was then the University of St. Petersburg.

Mandelstam presented an almost grotesque appearance. His thin, feeble body (always dressed in loud checkered suits) was surmounted by an unnaturally large head on a skinny neck. His reddish hair stood straight up surrounding a considerable baldness and his small bird-like face was framed by sideburns. He reminded one of a young cock. But his eyes, though framed by red-rimmed eyelids without eye-lashes, were shining, penetrating, beautiful eyes, and when he recited his poetry he became so transfigured that one forgot completely his ludicrous appearance. "Mandelstam was restless, bustling; he could not talk about anything consecutively for more than three minutes; he sat at the edge of a chair, all the time ready to run away somewhere as an engine under steam. But his verses are immovable; they possess that beauty which, according to Baudelaire, abhors even the slightest movement."<sup>4</sup>

Mandelstam's first verse which attracted much attention appeared in the July-August 1910 issue of "Apollo."<sup>5</sup> "These poems were astonishing. Indeed, astonishing . . . When I read them," writes Georgy Ivanov, "I felt a knocking at my heart: 'Why did I not write them?' Such 'poetical envy' is a very characteristic feeling. Gumilev considered that it evaluates 'the weight' of poetry more accurately than any analysis. If one has the feeling—'Why not I?'—you may be sure that the poetry is 'genuine'."<sup>6</sup>

From 1910 on, most of Mandelstam's poetry appeared in the review "Apollo" and in the Almanach published by that review.<sup>7</sup> In 1912 Mandelstam joined the acmeist group, and in 1913 his first book was published by the "Guild of Poets." It was entitled *Stone*.<sup>8</sup> In it Mandelstam, whom a critic called "a troublous poet,"<sup>9</sup> revealed himself a true acmeist, treating the word delicately but firmly, fully the master of his medium. His poetry is characterized "by an at-

<sup>4</sup>Ilya Ehrenburg, *Portrety russkikh poetov*, Berlin, 1922, p. 103.

<sup>5</sup>*Apollon*, No. 9, 1910, pp. 5-7; Kozmin erroneously gives the date of 1909 (Kozmin, *Pisateli*, p. 178).

<sup>6</sup>Ivanov, *Peterburgskiya*, p. 113.

<sup>7</sup>*Almanakh Apollon*, St. Petersburg, 1912, pp. 40-41.

<sup>8</sup>Osip Mandelstam, *Kamen'*, St. Petersburg, 1913; 2nd enlarged ed., Petrograd, 1916; 3rd ed., Moscow, 1923.

<sup>9</sup>E. Anichkov, *Novaya russkaya poeziya*, Berlin, 1923, p. 113.

traction for classical models, by a grandiloquent severity, by the cult of historical themes,"<sup>10</sup> but primarily by a balancing fusion of the outer and inner worlds of a poet expressed in swaying rhythms. There is a feeling of permanency in his lines even beyond living existence, a contempt for the momentary and the transitional, as well as excellent craftsmanship. To him even beauty was man-made when he said:

The beautiful's not a demi-god's whim  
But a simple carpenter's rapacious eye-measure.<sup>11</sup>

More than the other acmeists, Mandelstam was fit to be a member of the "Guild of Poets" in its original, medieval sense because poetry to him was not only a calling but also a craft, as he showed in this chiselled poem:

A body's given me—what then to do with it,  
When it is so my own, so very definite?

Whom should I thank, oh! tell me, for the bliss,  
The quiet bliss to live and breathe like this?

I am the gardener and the bloom as well,  
In nature's prison I do not rebel.

My breathing and my warmth have been impressed  
Upon the windows of unendingness.

Their pattern will be set in rigid rhymes,  
Unrecognizable from recent times.

And let the moment's turbidness flow down—  
The lovely pattern's lines it could not drown.

Although at first Mandelstam seems to be introspective, in reality he is impersonal. The "I" in his poetry may not be Mandelstam at all, but merely a reflection of himself as provided by his imagination. Even his emotionalism seems detached:

Thy image, wavering, tormenting,  
I could not in the fog discern.  
"Oh, Lord!" I cried, my slip lamenting,  
Not thinking in my deep concern.

God's name, its wings unfurling holy,  
Flew out of my oppressed breast.  
In front—thick fog is rolling slowly,  
Behind—an empty cage unblest.

<sup>10</sup>*Literaturnaya*, VI (1932), p. 757.

<sup>11</sup>All translations are by the author.

This impersonal quality of Mandelstam's poetry was commented upon by both pre- and post-revolutionary critics. Zhirmunsky, who considered Mandelstam the most interesting representative of the young poetry of the time, next to Akhmatova, wrote: "Using the terminology of Friedrich Schlegel, one may call his verse not a poetry of life, but a poetry of poetry (*die Poesie der Poesie*), i.e., a poetry which has as its subject not life itself as perceived directly by the poet, but someone else's artistic conception of life."<sup>12</sup> And the Soviet critic Selivanovsky echoed this when he said: "Mandelstam's poetry is not a direct reflection of life, but a reflection of its reflection in art."<sup>13</sup> To this he added:

When we re-read the works of Mandelstam, it becomes clear to us that this poet is very much afraid of life, of real people and of their real conflicts and experiences, and that he obtains relative peace only when from living people he turns to books. The most frightening thing for Mandelstam is any kind of change in reality. His demand for "stability" in life and in art is nothing but a demand for their immobility and inertia. He has no social instincts or interests and he says himself: "No, never was I a contemporary of anyone."<sup>14</sup>

There may be a good deal of truth in this, because in real life Mandelstam was afraid of everything and everybody.<sup>15</sup> But this timidity was only the timidity before the unknown. What Mandelstam knew he was not afraid of. And he knew poetry, he knew art. At times he even knew man, as when he wrote:

Let names of flowering towns and cities  
Caress the ear by their fragile importance.  
It isn't Rome that lives throughout the ages,  
But man's location in the universe.

Kings try to make him their possession,  
Priests justify the carrying of wars,  
Yet without him the houses, temples—  
Like piteous dust—are worthy of contempt.

Mandelstam loved "heavy," ponderous words. There is an architectural quality in his poetry. He said himself: "We do not fly, we merely ascend those towers which we can build ourselves."<sup>16</sup> And he builds his poems, as once were built the Gothic towers of

<sup>12</sup>V. Zhirmunsky, "Preodolevshie simvolizm," *Russkaya Mysl*, Dec. 1916, pp. 43-44.

<sup>13</sup>A. Selivanovsky, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi sovetskoi poezii*, Moscow, 1936, p. 60.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup>Ehrenburg, *Portrety*, p. 104; Ivanov, *Peterburgskiya*, p. 121.

<sup>16</sup>Selivanovsky, *Ocherki*, p. 50.

his beloved Notre Dame of Paris, of permanent material to last for ages. That is why the title of his first book—*Stone*—is so significant. But the choice of his material imposed upon the poet, the creator, the architect, its own limitations; hence there is "an imprint upon his poetry of artistic laconicism,"<sup>17</sup> which gives it a classical form.<sup>18</sup> This tendency toward classicism also forced Mandelstam to remain within the framework of the established rules of Russian prosody. Therefore, the often startling effects of his poetry are achieved solely by his style and the inner content of his poems, not by any innovations of poetical form.

Like Akhmatova, he is epigrammatic in the recording of his impressions. But he does not prompt the reader by word-suggestions to perceive the mood of the picture he presents; on the contrary, he gives a precise and peculiar word formula of it:

Oh! sky, Oh! sky, about you I'll be dreaming!  
It could not be that you're so diaphane.  
Like a white page on fire the day was gleaming:  
A little smoke and ash are all that now remain.

Analyzing this manifestation of Mandelstam's poetical gift, the critic Zhirmunsky wrote:

It is interesting to examine closely how Mandelstam selects those particularities and details with which he re-creates the impression of this or that artistic presentation. Least of all can one call him an impressionist who reproduces directly and without selectivity, without any rational associations, those visual spots which are the first and as yet unrealized impressions of outer objects. At first glance the details consciously selected according to his artistic taste may seem accidental and unnoticeable; their meaning in the creative imagination of the poet is immeasurably exaggerated; a small item grows to fantastic proportions as if in a purposely distorted grotesqueness; at the same time the relation in perspective between insignificant and large objects disappears; the distant and the near-by in the projection on the surface appear of equal dimensions. But in this deliberate distortion and fantastic exaggeration a previously unnoticed particularity becomes expressive and characteristic of the subject under presentation.<sup>19</sup>

When reviewing the second enlarged edition of Mandelstam's *Stone*, Gumilev wrote: "The poet becomes an adept of the literary movement known under the name of acmeism. He has used to perfection the knowledge that not a single image has an independent

<sup>17</sup>*Literaturnaya*, VI (1932), p. 757.

<sup>18</sup>Mandelstam was very fond of French classicism and did excellent translations from Racine.

<sup>19</sup>Zhirmunsky, "Preodolevshiye," p. 46.

meaning and is needed only for the purpose of revealing the poet's soul as fully as possible. He speaks now about his human thought, his love or hatred, and defines his objects with precision."<sup>20</sup>

Since his days at Heidelberg, Mandelstam was interested in philosophy, which he continued to study while a student at the University of St. Petersburg. In 1913 he was particularly attracted by Roman Catholic universalism and by the pro-Catholic Russian philosopher of the first part of the nineteenth century, Peter Chaadaev, about whom he wrote later an article in "Apollo."<sup>21</sup> Also in 1913 he wrote an article on François Villon, which was accompanied by Gumilev's translations from the works of this fifteenth century French poet.<sup>22</sup> The next year his interest shifted to the Russian Christian historic-philosopher Konstantin Leontiev.<sup>23</sup>

During the world war the poetry of Mandelstam, unlike that of his master Gumilev, did not reflect any war themes with the exception of one remarkable piece, written in 1916 and entitled "Menagerie." Beginning with the lines:

The word of peace has been rejected  
At the beginning of our offended era,

it tells how, while the world was busy with its peaceful pursuits, "the German raised an eagle," "the lion submitted to the Briton," "the Gallic cock grew a comb as a weapon," and the savage took hold of the earth. The poet then proposes to build a cage and to place therein "the cock, the lion, the eagle and the bear" and having made the beasts secure in their menagerie

We shall then have acquired peace for long;  
And then the Volga's waters will be fuller,  
The Rhine's bright stream will sing a song.

On the whole, as a poet Mandelstam is not a realist as some of the other acmeists were (Gorodetsky, Narbut, Zenkevich) nor even a romantic realist as Gumilev was. He is more of a fanciful realist in the same way as E. T. Hoffmann. According to his poetical technique he could be called a fantastic creator of words in the same manner in which the German poet could be called a fantastic creator of images and plots. Nevertheless, Mandelstam has a kinship with his

<sup>20</sup>N. Gumilev, "Pisma o russkoi poezii," *Apollon*, No. 1, 1916, p. 31.

<sup>21</sup>Osip Mandelstam, "Petr Chaadaev," *Apollon*, No. 6-7, 1915, pp. 57-62.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, "François Villon," *Apollon*, No. 4, 1913, pp. 30-35.

<sup>23</sup>Kozmin, *Pisateli*, p. 179.



generation of Russian poets "in the absence of the personal, emotional, and mystical elements in their poetical presentation as well as in their conscious word technique, their love for graphic detail and their consummate epigrammatic treatment of expression."<sup>24</sup>

When the first revolution occurred in 1917, Mandelstam did not choose to follow the new paths, although in his youth he belonged at one time to the Social-Revolutionary Party and was active in socialist propaganda among the workers of St. Petersburg.<sup>25</sup> "The October revolution did not produce any upheavals in Mandelstam's poetical creation,"<sup>26</sup> but his poetry now reveals pessimism and resignation. He defines the state of affairs in one line: "From easy life we lost our mind." There is not much left now to do:

Only children's books to read,  
Only children's thoughts to cherish,  
All that's great to cast adrift,  
And from endless grief to perish.

In 1918 he wrote a deep and penetrating poem entitled "The Dusk of Freedom":

Let's brethren, glorify the dusk of freedom,  
The great and dusky year  
.....  
Let's glorify the dusky weight of power  
And its intolerable yoke.  
Who has a heart must hear, Oh! timeless hour,  
How your good ship sinks broke.  
.....  
Well, let us try this huge, unwieldy  
And screechy rudder's turn.  
.....  
We shall remember when to Lethe yielding  
That heaven we must earn.

Commenting on this poem, Ilya Ehrenburg wrote:

Poets greeted the Russian revolution by wild exclamations, by tears and cries of the possessed by the devil, by ecstatic delirium, by curses. But Mandelstam—the poor Mandelstam who never drinks unboiled water and who crosses the street when he has to pass by a police station—was the only one to comprehend the pathos of events. The "great men" vociferated, but the little busybody of St. Petersburg cafés, having understood the grand scale of

<sup>24</sup>Zhirmunsky, "Preodolevshie," p. 49.

<sup>25</sup>Kozmin, *Pisateli*, p. 178.

<sup>26</sup>*Literaturnaya*, VI, p. 757.

what was happening, the majesty of history in the making, glorified the madness of our times when he exclaimed: "Well, let us try this huge, unwieldy and screechy rudder's turn."<sup>27</sup>

In the same year he wrote a beautiful, haunting poem about the city in which he was raised and came to maturity, the city he loved so much—St. Petersburg—Petrograd—Petropolis:

On fearful heights—an erring light.  
But is it thus a star is hieing?  
Translucent star, the erring light,  
Your kin, Petropolis, is dying.

On fearful heights burn earthly dreams;  
An emerald star is slowly flying.  
If you are sky's and water's kin,  
Your kin, Petropolis, is dying.

A monstrous ship on fearful heights  
Unfurls its wings all space defying.  
Oh! emerald star! in great distress  
Your kin, Petropolis, is dying.

Translucent spring o'er Neva's night  
Broke down. Eternity is crying.  
If you're Petropolis, oh, star,  
Your town, Petropolis, is dying.

This heart-rending cry of distress from the very soul of a poet who wrote hitherto such impersonal and dispassionate poetry is very significant. As his world went crumbling down around him, he could not fail to be moved. But soon thereafter comes a note of profound resignation:

All that is here was once before and will occur again,  
And sweet to us is but the moment of cognition.

The poet "deliberately denies the novelty of what is happening about him," in the words of the Soviet critic A. Tarasenkov,<sup>28</sup> and turns his back to the present.

All these poems appeared in Mandelstam's second book, characteristically entitled *Tristia* and published in 1922.<sup>29</sup> This book contained also a beautifully worded poem in blank verse:

<sup>27</sup>Ehrenburg, *Portrety*, pp. 104-105.

<sup>28</sup>*Literaturnaya*, VI, p. 758.

<sup>29</sup>Osip Mandelstam, *Tristia*, Petersburg-Berlin, 1922 (although the cover has the date: 1921); 2nd ed. entitled *Vtoraya Kniga. Stikhi*, Moscow, 1923.

Take for your joy from my outstretched palms  
A little bit of sun, a little bit of honey,  
As bees tell us Persephone has ordered.

One can't unfasten an unfastened boat,  
One cannot hear the furry steps of shadows,  
One cannot master fear in this primeval life.

All that is left to us are only kisses  
Like shaggy tiny bees that promptly die  
As soon as they have left the beehive's safety.

Take then for joy my reckless, crazy present—  
A dry unsightly necklace made of bees  
Who died while into sunshine changing honey.

Although from these poems it is obvious that Mandelstam was out of tune with what was happening in Soviet Russia, he remained there, as did Gumilev and Akhmatova. For a while, after the death of Gumilev, he tried to head a movement for the establishment of a new classicism in Russian poetry<sup>30</sup> which coincided with a general revival of interest in Pushkin and his contemporaries among Soviet poets. But the revolutionary tempo of spreading materialism, the accent on proletarian literature, and the hostile attitude of Soviet critics prevented the development of the movement. Mandelstam's poetical voice, which sounded rarely even in normal times, became less and less frequently heard. In 1923 he published a long poem entitled "The Finder of the Horseshoe" in which he "proclaimed the principle of inertia as belonging to a 'primevally eternal' category."<sup>31</sup> Two years later he wrote a remarkable poem, reminiscent of "The Trolley Car Which Lost Its Way" by Gumilev, entitled "A Concert in the Railway Station," in which he compares the noises of steam and the clank of metal to the music of an orchestra. But into the reality of a railway station enters the fantasy of the poet who speaks of "cars departing to Elysian fields" and of others solidly entrenched in the present. "I missed the train. I'm frightened. It's a dream," exclaims the poet and concludes his poem with these sad lines:

Why all this rush? At funeral's repast for our beloved ghost  
For the last time the music plays for us.

Commenting on this poem the Soviet critic, G. Lelevich, wrote: "The principal thing in it is an obvious feeling of the crumbling of

<sup>30</sup>V. Lvov-Rogachevsky, *Noveishaya russkaya literatura*, Moscow, 1927, p. 303.

<sup>31</sup>*Literaturnaya*, VI (1932), p. 758.

the world of reality, a feeling of having reached a fearful boundary, a limit, beyond which begins the agony, the realization of the nearness of the end."<sup>32</sup> This Marxist critic was probably right, for in 1925 Mandelstam stopped writing poetry and turned to prose.<sup>33</sup> He published first a collection of autobiographical sketches<sup>34</sup> and later a most interesting novelette entitled "The Egyptian Stamp,"<sup>35</sup> but he devoted most of his time to translations. Although a collection of his poems appeared in 1928,<sup>36</sup> it did not contain any new items. From then on his name disappeared from the roster of writers in the Soviet Union. And death finally came to him, now an obscure translator, in 1945. But as a poet, Mandelstam died twenty years before that, when at the funeral repast for his beloved ghost, music of divine inspiration played for him for the last time.

<sup>32</sup>G. Lelevich, "Gippokratovo litso," *Krasnaya Nov'*, No. 1, 1925, p. 297.

<sup>33</sup>*Literaturnaya*, VI (1932), p. 758.

<sup>34</sup>Osip Mandelstam, *Shum vremeni*, Moscow, 1925.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid*, *Yegipetskaya Marka*, Leningrad, 1928.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid*, *Stikhotvoreniya*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1928.

# Family and Inheritance in Soviet Law

By VLADIMIR GSOVSKI\*

## I

MARRIAGE, divorce, and inheritance were among the first institutions to be affected by Soviet revolutionary decrees. In December 1917, during the second month of the Soviet régime, two decrees appeared. One introduced divorce upon consent of both spouses or even upon the request of one. In both instances, no statement of grounds was required. As Brandenburgsky, professor of law, commented later: "A dissoluble marriage, and not a lifelong union, was the first principle of the new legislation." The second decree substituted civil marriage for religious marriage which had been the dominant form of marriage under Russian pre-Soviet law.

The meager provisions of these decrees were replaced in 1918 by a *Code of Laws Relating to Acts of Civil Status*—marriage, family, and guardianship. The Code followed in the main the decrees but showed a radical departure from the traditional family concept. "Birth itself," declared the Code, "shall be the basis of the family. No differentiation whatsoever shall be made between relationships by birth, whether in or out of wedlock." This provision was given a retroactive effect. Brandenburgsky commented upon this principle, which was sustained until 1944, that "Soviet legislation has completely detached family relationship from marital relationship. Family relationship or consanguinity is not based with us upon marriage but upon birth." The Code emphasized that children have no rights to the property of the parents and vice versa. While stating the parental duty to take care of the minor children and their education, the Code failed to provide for the parental authority or for the responsibility of parents for their children. The duty of parents to give maintenance to their children as well as the duty of children to support parents was conditioned by the fact of childrens' or parents' destitution and inability to work. This duty of support was recognized only insofar as the children "were not provided for from public or state

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funds," and the parents did not receive old age pensions or other forms of social security.

However, the most radical departure from the traditional concept of marriage and divorce was carried out much later in the *Code on Domestic Relations* enacted in 1926. In this respect the Soviet law took a course contrary to the doctrine of Marxist philosophy according to which family relations are conditioned by "the mode of production of commodities." Little credence may be given to the contention of a Soviet law textbook of 1938, that "the Socialist Revolution which has created new social relations in the production and distribution of commodities and in the sphere of culture and everyday life, is also creating new Socialist family relations." Thus, it was the Code enacted in 1926, at the time of a general relaxation in the pursuit of Socialist reconstruction, that showed the most radical departure from the family law known to the capitalist countries. Declaration of the victory of a Socialist economic order made in the 1936 Constitution was followed by gradual withdrawal of the innovations in family law.

The fate of inheritance under the Soviet régime was somewhat different. As early as the fourth month of the Soviet régime the abolition of inheritance was bluntly declared. It was admitted, within certain limits, with the advent of the New Economic Policy in 1922, when several concessions to capitalism were made in law. Since then, the inheritance of property became firmly entrenched, and its original restrictions have been progressively reduced.

Under the First Five Year Plan (1929-1933) the rigid enforcement of a socialist economic order was resumed, private enterprise was completely eliminated, and the Constitution of 1936 officially announced that socialism was achieved in the Soviet Union, all the basic instruments of production having been assigned to government property. However, the inheritance of property was written into the Constitution, succession rights were gradually extended, and a greater freedom in bequeathing individual property was recognized.

Thus, both the family and the inheritance were challenged by the early Soviet laws, but both have shown a stubborn vitality and proved to be indispensable institutions even in a Socialist régime, which the Soviet State officially claims to be. In the following pages an analysis is offered of the successive stages in the transformation of Soviet legislation affecting family and inheritance.

## II

*The Code on Domestic Relations* enacted for the R. S. F. S. R., the largest leading state of the Soviet Union, on October 22, 1926, was in the main followed by all other Soviet republics. This Code was not only at variance with the former Russian law, but also made the Soviet civil marriage totally different from the civil marriage in any other country. The Code of 1918 prescribed that "only a civil (Soviet) marriage registered in the Civil Status Record, should produce the rights and duties of spouses"; it denied any legal status to the religious marriage. (The effect of the religious marriage antecedent to the law or the establishment of the Soviet régime in a given locality was maintained.)

The Code of 1926 used a different language. A more than terminological significance was attached to the word "registration." The provisions of the Code suggested that such registration was not, strictly speaking, equivalent to the celebration of a marriage. It supplied only the best proof that a marriage existed, until the contrary was established in court. "The registration of marriage," read the Code, "shall furnish conclusive evidence of the existence of the state of matrimony."

In accordance with the concept of registration as mere evidence of marriage, the Code instructed the courts what "evidence of marital cohabitation, in case the marriage was not registered," should be sufficient for the court. These were "the fact of cohabitation, combined with a common household, evidence of marital relations before third parties or in personal correspondence and other documents, mutual financial support, the raising of children in common if supported by circumstantial evidence, and the like." Moreover, "persons who live in a state of *de facto* matrimonial relations, not registered in a manner prescribed by law, shall be entitled to legalize their status at any time, stating the period of actual cohabitation." Thus, on the one hand, any informal cohabitation had the effect of marriage with respect to marital property rights and succession rights of the spouses and children, if duly proved. On the other hand, a religious marriage had no legal effect in itself, but if it was followed by factual marital relations, it assumed the status of a *de facto* marriage with all the legal consequences thereof.

The rights of children to maintenance and succession did not depend on their being born in registered wedlock. The parent-child relationship remained totally independent of marriage, registered or

not. Fatherhood, if established in court, entailed the liability of supplying maintenance and support and gave the right of succession to children born in or out of wedlock. But the qualifying clause making the duty of mutual support of parents and children dependent upon the absence of public or government support, was omitted. The State evidently did not visualize a social security system as a substitute for support by next of kin.

The Soviet divorce under the Code of 1926 had no less striking features than Soviet marriage. Either spouse had complete freedom to register the discontinuance of marital life without stating the reasons therefor. The divorce was recorded by the Civil Registry Office, not only upon a declaration by both spouses, but also upon a unilateral declaration by either spouse of his or her desire to discontinue conjugal life. Neither a statement of reasons for such action nor any judicial proceedings were required. The other party was summoned, but in case of failure to appear the entry of the divorce in the Civil Registry Record was made, and the party had no right to oppose the divorce. In other words, just as Soviet marriage was merely a registration of existing marriage, the Soviet divorce was not a divorce, but a registration of the fact that marital life was discontinued.

Several other provisions of Soviet statutes contributed to a new background for sexual life in the Soviet Union. In 1920 abortion was permitted. The Soviet Criminal Code did not provide for punishment of bigamy, incest, adultery, and homosexuality. Polygamy was punishable only in regions where Mohammedanism prevailed among the population. Other provisions of Soviet law sought to undermine the importance of family ties and make children independent of parents and irresponsible. Prior to 1935, children were not held criminally responsible before the age of 16. Juvenile delinquents were handled not by courts but by special boards which were supposed to apply only measures of an educational nature. Minors under 14 were not liable for any damage caused outside of criminal offenses (torts). On the other hand, parents were not liable for damage caused by their children who reached the age of 14.

There may still be doubt in respect to the social objectives sought then by the Soviet legislators. Was such legislation visualized as a preparatory step toward a society without the family, where the State takes care of the children and the union of man and woman is left to the unlimited freedom of personal inclination, or did the legislators believe in the monogamous family as a union for life, considering only any legal safeguards for such family superfluous? Many

statements bluntly supporting the first hypothesis were made by prominent Soviet leaders in the early years of the Soviet régime. For instance, Madam Kollontay, at one time diplomatic representative of the Soviet Union in Norway, writer on the family under Communism, and a prominent member of the Old Bolshevik guard, wrote in 1919 that "the family has ceased to be a necessity both for its members and for the State." Likewise, Bukharin, who, though later executed as a traitor, was for a long time a recognized theoretician of the Soviet régime, characterized the family as "a formidable stronghold of all the turpitudes of the old régime." An anticipation of the disappearance of the family in the Socialist state is evident in the following explanation of the *Soviet Code on Domestic Relations* given in 1927 by Professor Brandenburgsky, the author of standard texts on the subject:

Until Socialism is achieved the individual family is inescapable. . . . We undoubtedly are approaching public upbringing of the children, free labor schools, the widest social security at the expense of the State. If at present we maintain the duty of mutual support within the family, we do it because the State cannot yet, for the time being, replace the family in this respect. . . . The family creating a series of rights and duties between the spouses, the parents and children, will certainly disappear in the course of time and will be replaced by governmental organization of public education and social security.

Moreover, certain provisions of the Code led the Supreme Court of the R. S. F. S. R. to a tacit recognition of the legality of bigamy and a loose sexual life. Thus, the court affirmed a decision of a lower court by which two women were declared *de facto* wives of a decedent and awarded both a share in the estate.

A reverse trend began about 1935. In that year the parents were made responsible for disorderly conduct and hooliganisms of their children and held liable to fine, up to 200 rubles, by police authorities. Parents and guardians were also made liable jointly with minors, who reached the age of 14, whenever these caused damages. It was also enacted in 1935 that "minors who have reached twelve years of age and are indicted for larceny, violence causing bodily injury, murder, or attempted murder shall be tried by the criminal court, which may impose upon them any measure of punishment." In 1940 this rule was extended to minors who have reached twelve years of age and who committed acts endangering railroad traffic, such as loosening of rails, placing objects on the rails, and the like.

In the middle thirties, a series of laws were enacted making divorce

slightly more difficult and expensive. Abortion was made a punishable offence in 1936, and homosexuality in 1934.

In palpable discord with the concept of marriage advocated before, with the statutory provisions and rulings by the courts, new principles were announced in the Soviet press. On May 28, 1936, *Pravda* commented on the prohibition of abortion and the increase of fees for divorces:

So-called free love and loose sexual life are altogether bourgeois and have nothing in common either with Socialist principles and ethics or with the rules of behaviour of a Soviet citizen. Marriage is the most serious affair in life. . . . Fatherhood and motherhood become virtues in the Soviet land.

Quoting these statements, Boshko, a Soviet professor of law, wrote in the official periodical of the Attorney General:

Marriage, basically, and in the spirit of Soviet law is in principle essentially a lifelong union. . . . Moreover, marriage receives its full lifeblood and value for the Soviet State only if there is birth of children, proper upbringing, and if the spouses experience the highest happiness of motherhood and fatherhood.

The author sought to reconcile these ideas with the then existing laws. Boshko argued that: "Freedom of divorce is not in conflict with marriage as a lifelong union, but on the contrary it presupposes such freedom as its foundation [which may admit of some exceptions]." However, this reconciliation was only verbal. The tenor of the discussion sounded like the inauguration of a program of support of the family along traditional lines, and the recent Soviet legislation on marriage and divorce was the implementation of such a program. It has gone even further than in many countries where only civil marriage is recognized. It bars common-law marriage, bastardy proceedings, and the duty of a father to support his illegitimate child. It also creates illegitimacy.

Since July 8, 1944, only a marriage registered with the Civil Registry Office has had the legal effect of a marriage and created the rights and duties of husband and wife and fatherhood uniformly in the whole of the Soviet Union. Persons who were living in *de facto* marital relations prior to July 8, 1944, were allowed, however, to legalize their marital status by registering the marriage and indicating the time which had elapsed since the beginning of their conjugal life.

The mother of a child born before July 8, 1944, outside of a registered marriage may claim alimony for the child from the person who



is the natural father of the child only if he has been entered as such by the Civil Registry Office, and such children have succession rights to the property of the person so entered. But all children born after July 8, 1944, outside of a registered marriage have no succession rights to the father's property and may not claim the father's name. Nor are such fathers liable for maintenance and support of children born outside a registered marriage. However, mothers of children born after July 8, 1944, outside a registered marriage receive aid from the government in a small fixed amount. Thus, children born outside a registered marriage after July 8, 1944, are comparable to illegitimate children in other countries, even if such terminology is not used. It remains to be seen whether the change in legal status will be followed in daily life by a social stigma on illegitimacy. This at least has been the story of illegitimacy in the past.

It is also significant that a recent law seeks to create an atmosphere of solemnity for the registration of Soviet marriage. Local authorities have been ordered to supply the Civil Registry Offices with well-furnished quarters appropriate for the celebration, with separate waiting room, and to keep them in good order. The date for registration must be arranged in advance; it takes place in the presence of the prospective bride and groom, and, if they wish, of their parents and friends. A certificate is then handed over to the newlyweds in the presence of a representative of the local administration. The managers of the government establishments and the collective farms are advised to furnish the newlyweds transportation to the Registry Office and to help them buy furniture, bedding, etc., for cash at fixed government prices.

No less radical is the change with regard to divorce. Since July 8, 1944, divorce has been granted only by the courts and only for reasons which the courts deem justifiable. Such reasons are not specified by statute and are left to the discretion of the courts. Divorce proceedings pass through two stages, each in a different court. The petition for divorce must be filed with the lower court, the people's court, by either spouse or both of them jointly. The petitioner must specify the reasons for which divorce is sought and must present witnesses and other evidence of the facts alleged. The people's court orders notice of the filing of the divorce suit to be published in the local newspaper at the expense of the plaintiff. The people's court does not decide the case but merely prepares it and attempts to reconcile the spouses; it summons the spouses to appear in person, hears them and the witnesses in order to ascertain the reasons for divorce

and takes steps toward their reconciliation. Should this court fail to reconcile the spouses, the petitioner may then file a complaint for divorce with the next higher court, which hears the case in public and grants the divorce if it finds the petition is based on good reasons. At the request of either party, the court may order the case to be heard *in camera*. The divorce decree may be appealed in accordance with the general rules. The government fee for filing the petition for divorce is one hundred rubles and from five hundred to two thousand rubles for registration of the divorce according to the determination of the court. Thus, it is now more difficult to obtain a divorce in Soviet Russia than in many capitalist countries.

The unlimited discretion of Soviet courts of first instance in granting or refusing the divorce signifies a departure from the original Soviet philosophy. The latitude of the departure appears striking upon comparison of this power with the following statements of Lenin:

Reactionaries are against the freedom of divorce. They are calling for a cautious treatment of such a freedom and are shouting that it means dissolution of the family. But democracy considers that the reactionaries are hypocritical and are in fact, defending the omnipotence of the police and the bureaucracy, the privilege of one sex, and the worst kind of oppression of women, that, in fact, freedom of divorce does not mean dissolution of family relations, but, on the contrary, their strengthening on democratic grounds, the only possible and stable grounds in a civilized society. . . . It is impossible to be a democrat and a socialist without immediately demanding complete freedom of divorce, because the absence of such freedom is the utmost oppression of the subdued sex, woman—although it does not take brains to gather that the recognition of freedom to leave one's husband is not an invitation for all wives to leave their husbands.

As late as 1938 the Soviet jurists insisted that the Soviets "do not have and could not have what is known in the capitalist countries as divorce proceedings." Yet, the Soviet divorce proceedings, after 1945, are stricter and offer the parties less privacy and certainty as to the final outcome than those of many capitalist countries.

Thus the Soviets have rediscovered the value of family life and strong family ties for the maintenance of sound public morals and the increase of population of a country which went through the calamity of a devastating war. Soviet marriage has at present the features of a normal marriage. But, on the other hand, recent Soviet legislation, though inconsistent with the earlier Soviet laws, shows a consistency of policy of interference of the State with the family life of the citizen. In the early stage, Soviet laws sought to disrupt and weaken the family ties. At present the interference goes the

other way. Under the old provisions of the Code of 1926, a religious marriage not followed by a civil registration but coupled with actual marital life may have passed for a *de facto* matrimony and gave the spouses and the children rights of succession and maintenance. Since 1945, such possibility is altogether excluded. Again, divorce, regardless of the ground, is not a matter of right, but is left to the unlimited discretion of the Soviet court which is an obedient instrument of government policy. Any quarrel between the conjugal partners, if brought before the court, may result in divorce only if the court considers it in conformity with "the general policies of the Soviet government" to which the court must resort under Section 4 of the Code of Civil Procedure in absence of statutory provisions bearing upon the case. No party, on the other hand, is guaranteed by law that the guilt of the other party will be deemed a sufficient ground for divorce. Moreover, the Soviet Attorney General may enter any civil suit, at any stage of proceedings, and may petition the Supreme Court to reopen *ex-officio* a case settled by a final judgment. The spirit of recent Soviet legislation on marriage is best exemplified perhaps by the law enacted in April 1947 which flatly prohibited marriage between Soviet citizens and aliens.

### III

From the time of the Communist Manifesto of 1848, abolition of inheritance of property has been considered a cornerstone of the Socialist program. In fulfillment of this program, the first Soviet decree dealing with inheritance proclaimed April 27, 1918, bore the title "Concerning the Abolition of Inheritance" and stated outright: "Testate and intestate succession are abolished. Property of an owner (movable as well as immovable) becomes after his death the domain of the Russian Socialist Soviet Federal Republic."

However, a consistent application of the repeal of succession seemed to be beyond the power of the Soviet government. The same decree permitted an estate not exceeding 10,000 rubles to "pass to immediate management and disposal" of the decedent's close relatives who had lived with him (Art. IX). Furthermore, "until a decree on universal social insurance is issued" close relatives of a decedent who left an estate exceeding 10,000 rubles were allowed to receive from the estate a sum necessary for self support (Art. IX).

Further exemption was made on May 21, 1919, regarding the estates left by the peasants. It must be borne in mind that, under the Imperial law, the general inheritance law (Vol. X, part I of the

Imperial Code of Laws) was not applicable to the succession among the peasants regarding the land which they have received at the time of the Emancipation Act in 1861 (the so-called "allotted" land-*nadel*), and property pertaining to farming on such lands. These lands constituted roughly 80 per cent of the total area of arable land held by the peasants on the eve of the Revolution. The tenure of such land and property incidental to farming (buildings, live stock, implements, and the like) were considered to be undivided property of all the members of a household (*dvor*), blood relatives, and strangers living and working under the same roof. A peasant, even if he were the head of the household, could not dispose of such property by testament, and it descended according to the local customs. Although these customs varied considerably from place to place, the principle of the undivided joint ownership of the entire household was very much in evidence everywhere and was recognized by the governing Senate, the supreme court of Imperial Russia.

Now, in spite of the abolition of the inheritance in 1918, the Commissar of Justice issued on May 21, 1919, an "interpretation" to the effect that properties belonging to a peasant household are not subject to the 10,000 rubles limit of an estate and were to remain in the possession and use of the spouse and the relatives of the deceased who had lived in his household, regardless of the value of the estate. Soviet legal writers considered later this provision to be a tacit recognition of the peasant customary law of succession.

In any event, the Soviet government had, at the time, no adequate apparatus to check upon all the estates in Russia. With regard to the peasants, the retreat from the abolition of inheritance was officially recognized by the above interpretation, while in the cities, according to Soviet writers, nobody had reported the estates of decedents to the authorities, these usually being divided among the individuals who happened to be present at the time of death. No estate actually taken by the State was recorded during the time that the law abolishing succession was in force. It remained a purely declaratory statement. There was, however, not much left to be inherited. The confiscatory Soviet decrees practically destroyed private ownership of all objects except those serving bare consumption needs. Private ownership of land was abolished, the bulk of private housing, major industrial and commercial enterprises, the means of transportation, banks, stocks and bonds as well as private bank accounts were confiscated.

With the advent of the New Economic Policy in 1922, a protection

of property rights and inheritance were promised, and the Soviet Civil Code which went into force on January 1, 1923, introduced inheritance although with some restrictions (Sections 416 *et seq.*). However, the Soviet leaders did not consider at that time inheritance to be a sound institution. Goikhbarg, the principal compiler of the Civil Code, bluntly characterized the recognition of inheritance to be a concession to the capitalist law "in principle and in practice," a concession permitted within strict limits for temporary economic reasons, *viz.* "to stimulate the accumulation of private wealth as permitted by law." This view was professed by Soviet jurists for a considerable period of time.

Thus as late as 1938, after the completion of the First Five Year Plan, the official textbook edited by Ginsburg and Pashukanis stated plainly that there is no place and no need for inheritance of property under a Communist régime. There is no place for it, because there must be no unearned income in the Communist system; because the able-bodied will work and thus have their living secured, while the disabled will be taken care of by the State through social insurance.

The actual development of Soviet legislation, however, shows a different tendency.

The Civil Code, as promulgated in 1922, sought to limit inheritance: (a) by setting at a fixed amount of 10,000 rubles the maximum permissible net value of an estate (Section 416); (b) by restricting the circle of persons to whom the estate might descend by intestate succession or by will (Section 418).

Thus, estates exceeding 10,000 gold rubles net value were declared to be the property of the State. However, rights arising from contracts between private persons and the government descended without any limitation in value to the heirs, and the value of these rights was not computed as part of an estate. The same was true of certain insurance premiums, according to the amendment of June 1, 1925 (Section 375a of the Civil Code).

If the net value of an estate exceeded 10,000 gold rubles, the estate was held in joint ownership by the State and the takers, and a special procedure was prescribed for the dissolution of the joint ownership and the distribution of the estate.

Again, the limitation of inheritance by the fixed value of 10,000 rubles met with practical difficulties. Moreover, the Soviet government decided "to aid the possibility of the continued existence of commercial and industrial enterprises after the decease of their owners and to establish more attractive conditions for the creation and in-



flux into the country of material and resources." Consequently, this maximum permissible value of the estate was abolished on February 15, 1926. Since then, a heavy progressive tax, up to ninety percent, has alone served as a check upon value passing by inheritance. However, this restriction disappeared in 1943, when the inheritance tax was abolished.

Thus, there is today no limitation on the value of an inheritance in Soviet Russia. A governmental fee is collected for the issuance of inheritance certificates; the scale is progressive, and the highest rate is ten percent. There remains, however, an indirect practical limitation based upon the monopoly of the U. S. S. R. State Bank in dealing with precious metals and foreign exchange: if such "foreign exchange values" belong to the estate, they must be deposited with the State Bank, and the inheritors receive only their equivalent in Soviet currency according to the official rate.

Another limitation on inheritance under the Civil Code consisted in restricting the circle of persons who may inherit. Although testaments were permitted, the testator had to select the beneficiaries from among the persons to whom the law assigned the estate in absence of a testament. Consequently, in fact, the testator could only change the shares of his heirs as defined by law or deprive one or all of them of succession. In such a case the share of the disinherited person reverted to the State. Thus whether under a will or in absence of a will only the following persons could inherit until March 15, 1945: direct descendants (children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren), the surviving spouse, and such disabled and destitute relatives or strangers, who were dependents of the deceased for at least one year before his death. Descendants inherited regardless of whether they were born in or out of wedlock. Neither parents nor collateral relatives such as brothers, sisters, nephews, etc. had any succession rights. After 1928, it was allowed to bequeath to the State, the Communist Party, and other organizations. Since 1928, children of the deceased under the age of 18 were guaranteed a share in the estate regardless of the will of the deceased.

The narrow limits of succession were gradually extended by Soviet legislation: first, in 1930 and 1935, some exceptions with regard to specific types of property were introduced; later, in 1945, the circle of eligible heirs was radically changed. The scheme of limitations on free disposition by will was abandoned first in regard to certain types of property. This was accomplished by declaring such property not part of the estate. In this category have been included in 1930 insur-

ance premiums, several kinds of government loans, stocks and bonds, and, in 1935, other deposits with government banks, including money deposits. The owner may dispose of such assets freely, not by a will but by a written assignment addressed to the bank and indicating the person to whom deposits shall be paid after the death of the depositor.

Thus, in addition to property that forms the estate of a deceased person and comes under the limitations prescribed for inheritance, there is property not included in the estate. This descends at the discretion of the owner and has not been subject to the inheritance tax. Property of this nature, money deposits and securities, are considered in any capitalist country to be *prima facie* capital. The Soviet régime started some thirty years ago with the abolition and confiscation of such property. At present, in theory, there exists the possibility of unlimited accumulation of private wealth in money and securities in Soviet Russia, if deposited in certain government banks. However, one circumstance is supposed to limit this possibility. This is the lack of legitimate and profitable avenues of activity that would facilitate such accumulation of capital, because private industrial and commercial enterprises are practically eliminated.

The rigid scheme of testate and intestate succession has been radically changed by the Edicts of March 14, 1945, and of June 12, 1945.

With regard to intestate succession, the Edict introduced a system of inheritance by classes somewhat similar to that of the Code Napoleon, the German Civil Code of 1900, and other European codes. Three classes of heirs by operation of law were established so that the heirs of the second class inherit only in the absence of any heirs of the first class, or on their refusal to take the estate, and the heirs of the third class inherit in the absence of heirs of the second class.

As before, the first class embraces children and their descendants, the spouse, and actual dependents, whether or not related to the deceased, but adds to this group disabled (unable to earn) parents of the decedent. In the absence of these persons, the heirs are the able-bodied parents of the deceased. In their absence, the estate devolves upon the heirs of the third class—the brothers and sisters (Section I of the Edict; Section 418 of the Civil Code as amended June 12, 1945).

The testator, in making his will, is at liberty "to bequeath all his property or a part of it to one or several persons from among those belonging to either of the three above-mentioned classes." Consequently, in contrast to the situation under the old provisions, he may leave bequests to either of his parents or to any of his brothers or

sisters. He may not, however, "deprive his minor children or other heirs who are unable to earn, of the portion which would belong to them under intestate succession." In addition, the testator may, subject to certain limitations, leave bequests to "governmental agencies and public institutions." The Communist Party is not specifically mentioned, but there is no doubt that it comes within the meaning of a "public organization."

If there are no persons belonging to either of the three classes of heirs outlined above, "the property may be bequeathed to any person."

In line with the general tendency towards broader recognition of succession rights, the original provisions of the Civil Code creating an especially favorable condition for the acquisition of estates by the government (escheat) were also changed. The Code required the heir absent from the place of estate to appear within six months and expressly declare the acceptance of the estate. In case of failure to do so or the renunciation of the estate, the share of the heir reverted to the State. But several court decisions and executive orders sought to soften the rigidity of this rule. The renunciation was construed very strictly and authorities handling the estate were ordered to advise the absent heirs. Finally, on March 15, 1945, it was enacted that the share of an heir who renounced inheritance or failed to accept it in due time goes to the other heirs.

There is also another aspect of the reform affecting children born out of wedlock (registered marriage). Under the original provisions, children born out of wedlock had succession rights equal to those of children born in wedlock (marriage registered with civil authorities). Under the Edicts of the Presidium of July 8, 1944, and March 15, 1945, children born out of wedlock have no right of succession after their fathers. Such a child may not claim the name of its father. Nor can its mother use the father for maintenance and support of the child. Thus, though the name illegitimate child is not used, the children born out of wedlock obtain a legal status totally different from that of children born in wedlock and all conditions are now in evidence to produce the stigma of illegitimacy.

The inheritance law as outlined in the Civil Code and its amendments has only a limited application to farming families. Like the peasant household under the Imperial law, the farming households in the collective farms remain units with a community property of its own kind. The membership in a collective farm is individual. Every member of a household belonging to a collective farm receives

his own share in collectively obtained income in proportion to his personal contribution of labor. This share forms his own personal ownership, constitutes his estate, and descends according to general rules of the Soviet inheritance law. But the house and garden plot (not more than 2.47 acres) appurtenant to the dwelling are assigned by the collective farm to a household, a family, not to an individual. Likewise the house itself is the property of the family. Each family is allowed to conduct its own "midget" farming on this plot and sell the produce on the open market. All the properties appertaining to such farming constitute the community property of the family. The share of a deceased member remains in the joint ownership of the household and does not descend by inheritance. These rules established by the Land Code of 1922 for independent farming households under the N. E. P. are still applicable to households in the collective farms, according to Soviet jurists. The Soviet law itself is silent. The old-fashioned peasant family household, though unwelcome, is an indispensable element of the collectivized system. Thus it is allowed to exist without explicit provisions of law defining the relations of the members of the household.

It may also be mentioned that Soviet law introduced community property of husband and wife in urban families in contrast to complete separation of property under Imperial law. Thus, in case of death the surviving spouse is entitled to his or her share in the common marital property, in addition to sharing as an heir in the estate.

#### IV

Recent Soviet legislation concerning inheritance is in obvious contradiction with the theory of disappearance of inheritance with the advent of Socialism, professed by Soviet jurists after the restoration of inheritance in 1922. The Soviet Constitution of 1936 officially terms Socialism the social order achieved in Soviet Russia, yet inheritance under this social order bears all the essential features of inheritance in a capitalist country. As a result, the Soviet legal theory has shown recently an astounding shift. The legal writings on the eve of World War II were mostly silent on the future disappearance of the inheritance (e.g. Textbook on Civil Law of 1938). The more recent works (Textbook of 1944) definitely shelve such disappearance to the most remote idyllic future beyond any human prediction, when, according to the expectations of Marx, "together with the manysided development of individuals, the productive forces shall also grow and all the sources of collective wealth flow in a full

current."<sup>1</sup> But at the present stage of "victorious Socialism," the Soviet jurists argue that inheritance "promotes protection of personal property of the toilers, increases the productivity of labor, strengthening the Soviet family and fortifying the relationship of the citizens of the U. S. S. R. with the Socialist society." They rightly emphasize that "descent of property cannot be an irrelevant matter for a citizen of the U. S. S. R.," and that "succession appears to be one of the stimuli for the development of personal ownership—for increasing the productivity of labor, and for fortifying the Socialist family." The earlier legal theories which characterized inheritance as a capitalist institution and declared the inheritance under Soviet law to be a "private form of, or substitute for social security" are at the present time declared "subversive" and their authors branded wrongdoers and wreckers. Paradoxically, in 1926 the removal of limitation of inheritance was officially motivated by the intention of securing "continued existence" of private enterprise (*supra*), but in 1938 and 1944 the abolition of this very private enterprise in Soviet Russia is given as the reason for inheritance of property as a sound institution of Soviet Socialist law.

Even the "abolition of inheritance" by the decree of 1918 is attempted to be explained away. Thus, a Soviet professor, Serebrovsky, who in 1927 wrote that the exceptions made to the law abolishing inheritance for small estates in 1918, "had nothing in common with the succession," has come to believe in 1945 that it is wrong, and that the "abolition of inheritance" declared at that time was not abolition but merely a transformation of inheritance. Other legal writers also share this opinion. At the present time, private enterprise is practically barred in the Soviet Union; there is no "capitalist private ownership" but "socialist ownership of the means of production" and "personal ownership" of articles of consumption and small housing. Therefore, the Soviet jurists argue that inheritance of property can no longer result in the resurrection of private enterprise and of capitalism. This, of course, is a matter of future development. It may be pointed out, however, that economic levelling is no longer attempted but is directly condemned in Soviet Russia. High wages for the executive and the technical personnel in government, industry, and commerce, extra remunerations and bonuses given to the above as well as to the inventors, scientists, writers, and artists, useful to the régime, permit very considerable accumulations of

<sup>1</sup>Marx and Engels. *Collected Works*, Russian ed. Vol. 15, p. 275.



money and properties as compared to the meager earnings of ordinary laborers. Such capital can be invested in government stocks and bonds and may bring winnings in government lotteries. Only the future will show what will happen with this capital, if inherited and engrossed in the course of two or three generations. One thing is clear: the possibility of an unearned income for the coming generations is established under the Socialist régime of present day Russia. Thus, in this field, as in many others, the Soviet leaders have had to sacrifice many of their original Socialist principles in order to keep things going and maintain the Communist Party in power.

# The Première of "The Inspector General"\*

By SERGEI BERTENSSON

IN the newspaper *St. Petersburg Journal*, on April 19, 1836, the following notice appeared in the "Amusements" column: "At the Alexandrinsky Theatre will be shown, for the first time, 'The Inspector-General,' an original comedy in five acts." The author's name was not mentioned.

Thus was announced the première of Gogol's immortal comedy, a play which, though now the pride of the Russian theatre, received anything but proper appreciation at first and brought its author grief and disappointment.

This is a brief historical sketch of the play's origin and production, reconstructed from Gogol's letters, memoirs, correspondence of his contemporaries, and other documents.

In his "Confessions of an Author," Gogol says that the idea of "The Inspector-General" was Pushkin's. The plot was based on actual incidents related by Pushkin to Gogol. According to Count V. A. Sollogub, one of these happened to Pushkin himself, in 1833, on his way to Uralsk, where he was going to collect material on the Pugachov rebellion. Pushkin had stopped over in Nizhni-Novgorod, where the governor, M. P. Buturlin, showed him a great deal of attention. From there he went on to Orenburg, where he stayed with his old friend, Count V. A. Perovsky, the governor of the province.

One morning Pushkin was waked by terrific laughter. He saw Perovsky standing before him and laughing uproariously. It appeared that he had just received a letter from Buturlin, including this piece of information: "Pushkin was here recently. Knowing who he is, I was very attentive to him, but I must confess that I don't believe that he is traveling to collect material on the Pugachov rebellion. He must have some secret mission to collect data on irregu-

\*This article was originally written in connection with a new production of "The Inspector-General" in the "Actors' Lab. Theater" in Hollywood, in October, 1946. The production was directed by M. A. Chekhov and a new translation was made by Mr. Bertensson and Arnold Belgard (Ed.).

larities. You know my feelings for you; I consider it my duty to advise you to be cautious."

When Pushkin told Gogol about this, he also mentioned a case that occurred in a small provincial town, in which some passing gentleman posed as an important official and swindled the townspeople.

"The Inspector-General" was born of the two facts, and Pushkin always called himself its god-father.

Gogol began his work on the comedy in the middle of October, 1835, and on December 4 of that year he wrote to the Moscow professor, M. P. Pogodin, that he had completed the play. But even after "The Inspector-General" had been accepted for production, and while it was in rehearsal, Gogol took pains to improve his work, and being fully convinced that "drama lives only on the stage, without which it is a soul without a body," he concentrated all his attention on polishing the performance text. Furthermore, after "The Inspector-General" had been played and published (in 1836), affording Gogol no little spiritual torment, he did not relinquish work on it, and it was not until 1842 that he completed a "final" text of his comedy, which was published in the first collected edition of his works.<sup>1</sup>

The first reading of "The Inspector-General" took place at the home of the poet, V. A. Zhukovsky, on January 18, 1836, during one of his "literary Saturdays." Gogol read it himself and, according to one of the auditors, the poet Prince V. A. Viazemsky, it was read masterfully, arousing the listeners to continuous explosions of laughter. Another witness, the writer I. I. Panaev, remarks in his memoirs that Pushkin, who was present, was so impressed by the play that during the reading "he rolled about with laughter."

When the new work was presented to the dramatic censor for permission to produce it on the stage, the authorities became frightened and forbade it at once. Then influential friends of the author began to busy themselves in the author's behalf. Zhukovsky, who was tutor to the heir apparent (the future Alexander II), Prince Viazemsky, Count Vielgorsky, all pulled whatever strings they could.

"The Inspector-General" was ordered to be brought to the Winter

<sup>1</sup>The first production of "The Inspector-General" was rehearsed from a working manuscript that differed both from the published edition of 1836 and from the definitive version of 1842. For some reason all theatres continued to use the first text, and Gogol's final version was not firmly established on the stage until 1870.

Palace, and the result was that the Emperor, Nicholas I, authorized the play's production.

In his *Chronicle of St. Petersburg Theatres*, A. I. Wolf writes that the play was read to the Emperor by Count Vielgorsky, but Prince P. A. Viazemsky insists, in a letter to A. I. Turgenev, that the Emperor read the play himself in manuscript. In any case, "The Inspector-General" was finally licensed for theatrical performance and for publication solely because of the personal command of the Tsar. Gogol wrote his mother: "If the Emperor hadn't shown his highest protection and had not interceded, 'The Inspector-General' would probably never have been performed or published."

When "The Inspector-General" was written, the Russian theatre was almost completely divorced from Russian reality. With the single exception of Griboedov's "Woe from Wit," the repertoire consisted of foreign melodramas and vaudevilles, either simply translated or else transferred to Russian locales, an adaptation that was usually limited to an alteration of foreign names to Russian ones. Gogol himself commented eloquently on this state of the theatre: "But where can talents develop? What can nourish them? Do actors ever find at least one Russian part in which they can vividly imagine themselves? Some sort of heathens—people that are neither French, nor German—God knows what. . . ."

The Petersburg and Moscow theatres of Gogol's time had many brilliant acting talents, but the general level of the theatrical art was still rather primitive. Actors were habituated to certain clichés, which had been created by the joint efforts of themselves and mediocre playwrights, and the slightest deviation from these clichés puzzled them.

When they were introduced to "The Inspector-General," actors felt lost, for, as A. Ya. Golovacheva-Panaeva notes in her memoirs, the characters created by Gogol were entirely new to them. Only one of the actors intuitively sensed the great qualities of the new comedy—Sosnitsky, a personal friend of Griboedov and Gogol, a man of great talent and the first to bring to the St. Petersburg stage an artistic simplicity and "life as it is."

Gogol arranged a reading of "The Inspector-General" for the troupe of the Alexandrinsky Theatre at Sosnitsky's apartment. At this reading was present a popular actor and playwright, P. A. Karatygin, who left us a description of the occasion: "When Gogol read 'The Inspector-General' to the actors at Sosnitsky's, most of them, brought up on comedies of the old-time authors, far removed from

real life, were perplexed. 'What is it,' they whispered to each other at the end of the reading. 'Can it be a comedy? He reads well, but what language! The servant talks like a servant, and the locksmith's wife is no more than a common peasant-woman, right out of the market-place. What can be enchanting our Sosnitsky so much? What good can Pushkin and Zhukovsky possibly find in it?' This was typical of the attitude taken to 'The Inspector-General' by its first performers. Actors as well as many writers didn't dare remove their powdered wigs, or take French cloaks from their shoulders in order to put on real Russian clothes, like Abdulin's coat or Osip's worn, soiled frock-coat."

Gogol was well aware that the chief danger for "The Inspector-General" lay with the actors, and he often gave, in his letters and conversations, instructions on the acting of his play. In every word one can see that his requirements of an actor were naturalness, truthfulness, and conscious penetration into each detail of the rôle.

These requirements were fulfilled at the première by only one actor, Sosnitsky, who fully comprehended his rôle of the Mayor.

The general supervision of the production was in the hands of the "inspector" of the theatre, A. I. Khrapovitsky, a person lacking all artistic and literary education, a bureaucrat whose functions actually should have been confined to exclusively administrative matters.

It was the custom of the time for the author to watch over the production of his play, performing somewhat the same functions as those of a modern director. This would not have been bad if a talented writer's intentions could have been carried out. Practice, however, revealed a different situation, which can be demonstrated by Gogol's experience.

At first Gogol took an active part in the play's production, attending rehearsals and personally giving the actors advice and suggestions, but the theatre's total inability to carry out his intentions appeared at once. With the single exception of Sosnitsky, none of the actors showed the slightest inclination to overcome their habitual clichés. Gogol started out by making a serious attempt to help them, but all his efforts were in vain. He soon realized that his suggestions and remarks had no effect and waived the whole thing aside.

One can visualize Gogol's state of mind on the day before the première in the following colorful recollection by Karatygin: "During the morning rehearsal, Gogol seemed very anxious and was evidently upset. He often spoke with Sosnitsky under his breath, and only occasionally did he speak with Khrapovitsky, who picked at his mous-



tache, smiled maliciously during many of the scenes, and shrugged his shoulders. Some of the younger actors and actresses privately winked at each other. Their immodest gaiety was aroused not by the comedy, but by its author. Middling height, with thick blond hair drawn over his forehead, with gold-rimmed eyeglasses on a long bird-like nose, with squinting eyes and tightly pressed lips, as if he were biting them, dressed in a green frock-coat with long tails and tiny pearl buttons, a high top-hat which Gogol would fitfully remove, run his fingers through his hair, and then twist the hat in his hands. All this gave his figure the appearance of a caricature. Nobody guessed what great talent hid in that weak body, nor what agonies he was going through, foreseeing that neither the performers nor most of the audience would appreciate the value of 'The Inspector-General' at its first performance."

The première attracted a huge crowd. Not only did the entire St. Petersburg intelligentsia turn out, including the fable-writer I. A. Krylov who rarely attended the theatre, but there were also the Imperial family, accompanied by courtiers and high officials, who seldom came to the Alexandrinsky Theatre, preferring ballets and the Italian opera. Nicholas I enjoyed himself hugely, often laughed aloud, and when, after the performance, he came onto the stage, he told the actors: "Well, it was quite a play! Everyone has got his due, I most of all!"

The author was called out for a bow, but he didn't appear, for he had already left, unsatisfied and upset. P. V. Annenkov, who knew Gogol intimately, provides, in his "Literary Recollections," a description of Gogol's spiritual state that evening: "He suffered throughout the evening. . . . Even after the first act, perplexity was written on every face, as if nobody knew what one was expected to think about what one had just seen. This perplexity grew with each act. The majority of spectators, pushed out of their usual theatrical habits, took comfort in the supposition that it was a farce that was being played and stuck to this idea with inflexible determination. However, this farce contained certain features that were filled with such living truth that once or twice, especially in moments that fully contradicted the comedy idea clung to by the majority, a general spontaneous laughter broke out. The fourth act evoked something else. From time to time laughter flew from corner to corner of the auditorium, but it was a rather timid laughter, vanishing at once; there was scarcely any applause, but rather a convulsive, tense following of the play's details, and often a dead silence indicating that the

events on the stage were clutching the hearts of the spectators. At the end of the act perplexity returned in the form of a general indignation which was only increased by the fifth act. Many called for the author because he had written a comedy and had made them laugh, but the general tenor of comment on all sides was, 'This is an impossibility, a calumny, a farce.' "

This great comedy, destined to liberate the Russian stage from foreign domination and to establish a genuinely national theatre firmly rooted in Russian soil, was played at its première as the most coarse sort of a vaudeville. It is not surprising, therefore, that Gogol, in his letter to an unknown *litterateur* (intended for Pushkin, but not sent and left unfinished) expressed his feelings thus: " 'The Inspector-General' has been given, and I feel so confused and strange within my soul . . . I knew how things would go, but nevertheless a sad and disagreeable heaviness overcame me. My own creation looked repulsive and strange to me, as if it were not mine. . . . From the very beginning of the performance I sat there bored. I felt no concern in the raptures and reactions of the audience. Of all the judges in the theatre, I feared only one—myself. Inside me I could hear reproaches and mutterings against my own play, and these drowned out all the others."

But it was not only dissatisfaction with the performance and production that disturbed Gogol. The matter was far more complex and profound. It was no longer a question of a possible failure, for "The Inspector-General" became firmly established in the theatre's repertoire, and the more often it was played, the more apparent was its success: it brought full houses, the public laughed, applauded noisily, and called for the author.

Moreover, critics whose opinions were valued greeted Gogol's work warmly, and the younger generation as well as the progressive section of society were enraptured by "The Inspector-General." But there was also opposition in a certain section of the press, and dissatisfaction with Gogol was expressed very sharply in broad circles of the capital.

Gogol was deeply depressed that, however distant he had kept in his play from all political problems, there were many who saw in it a social and even revolutionary idea. On the other hand, he couldn't get over the thought that his play had been received as a "vulgar farce" by those very people whose cure he had hoped to effect by his comedy.

In one of his letters to Zhukovsky, he said: "I had made up my

mind to collect all the evil things I knew, and then at once make fun of them—this is the origin of 'The Inspector-General.' This was the first work I planned in order to produce a good influence on society."

And in another letter to Zhukovsky, he explained that in "The Inspector-General" he "had not at all wished to make fun of the established order of government, but only of those who deviated from this order. I was angered both by the spectators who didn't understand me and by myself for being the cause of the misunderstanding."

He complained bitterly to the actor, M. S. Shchepkin: "All are against me. Old and respectable officials shout that nothing must be sacred for me if I dare to speak of civil servants in such a fashion; the police are against me, the merchants are against me, the writers are against me. They abuse me and then go to see my play; there weren't any tickets available for the fourth performance. If it hadn't been for the Emperor's august protection, my play would never have reached the stage, and already there were people who were getting ready to have it suppressed. Now I know what it means to be a humorist. As soon as the slightest wisp of truth appears, everyone is against you—not only individuals, but whole social groups."

Gogol expressed his spiritual anguish especially vividly in a letter to M. P. Pogodin: "I'm not angry that those who detect their own features in my originals abuse me. I'm not angry that my literary enemies from among the sold-out talents curse me; but I do feel sad for this general ignorance that has fallen upon the capital. I feel sad that the most stupid opinion of the most dishonored and spat-upon writer can still make an impression on them, and lead them by the nose; I feel sad to see what pitiful condition our writers still are in. . . . Swindlers are shown on the stage, and everyone becomes exasperated. Let the swindlers be angry; but why should those whom I didn't know as swindlers be angry? I sorrow because this ignorant irritability is a sign of a profound and stubborn ignorance. . . . The capital is insulted by the fact that six provincial officials have been shown; what would the capital say if it were shown, even faintly, its own characters?"

One might expect that Gogol would neglect reproaches and judgments coming from people whose opinion had not the slightest value and whose hostile attitude only proved the truthfulness of the proverb used as a motto for "The Inspector-General": "Do not chafe at the looking-glass if your mug is awry."

In reality, however, this hounding by the enemies of social, literary, and artistic progress roused in Gogol's sickly and naturally suspicious nature a fixed idea that all of Russia was against him, and he decided, at least for a while, to leave his country, "to run away, God knows where." His own play had become repugnant to him, and two months after its première, Gogol left for abroad.

Thus began in Gogol that oppressive mental ailment that developed later into a genuine mania that his literary activity was an evil thing. This ailment was climaxed by the burning of the second volume of *Dead Souls* and brought its author to a premature death.

# The Norman Theory of the Origin of the Russian State

BY N. RIASANOVSKY

## I

NO question in the entire field of Russian history has drawn more attention in historical literature, and has created more controversies than the problem of the origin of the Russian state. Ever since Bayer and Schloetzer stated the problem back in the eighteenth century in terms of extreme Norman influence, a battle has been fought between the Normanists on one side and the anti-Normanists on the other. The former represented a diverse group as far as their claims and the methods were concerned, while the latter usually had nothing in common, except their opposition to Normanism.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this article is not to add another opinion to the already enormous number of opinions on the subject of the origin of the Russian state. Its aim is rather to contribute towards the elimination of the fantastic discrepancy which exists with regard to this problem between the opinions of modern scholars on the one hand, and the obsolete statements one can find in various textbooks and general histories, on the other. While specialists in the field now know that the Scandinavian influence on Russian culture was negligible, general historical works, such as the *Cambridge Medieval History*,

<sup>1</sup>Especially valuable for the history of the controversy are the works of Schloetzer, Bayer, Krug, Kruse, Kunik, Pogodin, Thomsen, Beliaev on the Normanist side, of Lomonosov, Kostomarov, Ewers, Gedeonov, Ilovaisky on the anti-Normanist side. For the present status of the problem see the works of Moshin, Vernadsky, Derzhavin, Grekov, Mavrodin. The *Primary Russian Chronicle*, and some Byzantine and Oriental sources constitute the most important primary material. An interesting exercise for a person who is not acquainted with the subject and who knows only the standard Normanist explanation would be to read J. Brutzkus, "The Khazar Origin of Ancient Kiev," in *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 1944, Volume 22, Parts 1-4. An excellent although by no means exhaustive critical bibliography is provided by V. Moshin, *Varyago-Russkii Vopros in Slavia*, No. 10, 1931, pp. 109-136, 343-379, 501-537.

The latest criticism of Normanism is to be found in V. Riasanovsky, *Obzor russkoi kultury*, Part One, New York, 1947, Chapter Two. I have cooperated with my father in writing this chapter. In case of disagreement my father's opinion prevailed, which accounts for certain differences between the chapter and this article.



continue to speak glibly about Norman foundations of Russian law and government, Norman elements in the Russian language and literature, etc. While Professor Vernadsky, in an attempt to reconcile the Norman origin of the Russian state with the increasing evidence of the early existence of the state of the Rus in southern Russia, develops his own hypothesis of the arrival of the Normans on the shores of the Black Sea by A. D. 740, many books still begin the history of the Russian state with the traditional year A. D. 862. Likewise, in spite of the continuously growing literature on the origin of the name *Rus- Ros- Russia* most of the textbooks remain satisfied with one or another of the obsolete Normanist derivations. These textbooks and general works, merely reflect various early stages of the Normanist controversy, and some of them virtually ignore all the developments in the field since the eighteenth century.

In fact, most of the literature on the subject which is available in western languages, and in English in particular, strikes one as being one-sidedly and extremely Normanist. While many of the leading Normanist works have been written in German, and that of V. Thomsen in English (*The Relations between Ancient Russia and Scandinavia and the Origin of the Russian State*), practically no anti-Normanist works are available in any language but the Russian. Moreover, the few specialists in the field whom one can find in England and the United States, notably N. Beliaev and G. Vernadsky, happen to be Normanists of one kind or another. Their works, which are original contributions to the problem of the origin of the Russian state, often represent specific points of view peculiar to the authors rather than theories generally accepted by modern scholarship. In addition, Anglo-American historical literature has been influenced by numerous western European, especially Scandinavian, authors who usually repeat verbatim the arguments and conclusions of a few Normanist scholars, in particular Kunik, Thomsen, and even Schloetzer, and overwhelm the English reader through repetition. The worst feature of these writers is that they present as "definite," "proved," and "incontestable" issues which are usually indefinite, tenuous, obscure, and controversial.

## II

In the vast and diverse historical literature concerning the Norman theory of the origin of the Russian state, one basic trend is clearly discernible throughout: the gradual loss of the Normanist

positions. The Norman theory, as originally formulated by Bayer and Schloetzer and developed by Muller, Krug, Kruse, Lehrberg, Fraehn, Pogodin and others, claimed that the entire Russian culture—religion, customs, political structure, law, art—owed its origin and the first two centuries of its development to Scandinavians-Normans, who came to Russia in the middle of the ninth century and dominated that land until the middle of the eleventh. This astounding theory could exist only as long as the ignorance of Russian antiquity was practically complete, and as long as there was no native Russian historical school. Gradually, when the evidence against them became overwhelming, the Normanists had to modify their views and curtail their claims. Kunik, Thomsen, and their followers admitted a considerable native Slavic participation in the formation of Russian culture and of the Russian state; they merely claimed that the basic, guiding element and the fundamental institutions were Norman. With subsequent development of Russian historiography even that position became untenable. Contemporary Normanists, e.g. Moshin, speak only of an important Norman participation in the formation of the Russian state. With regard to culture, instead of describing the Kievan law or art as essentially Scandinavian, they make much less definite claims of Norman stimulation of Russian culture through providing political unification or through establishing closer ties with Byzantium.

This shift in the Normanist position was due primarily to the gradual discovery of the extremely important cultural and ethnical background of the Kievan state. Far from being primitive forest dwellers who could be brought to political and cultural life only by the phenomenal energy and ability of the Normans, the Slavs of the Kievan state were found to be the inheritors of centuries of cultural development in southern Russia. The state of Oleg and Sviatoslav was preceded by Cimmerian, Scythian, Sarmatian, Gothic, and Khazar states, which had attained a fairly high degree of cultural life and benefited greatly from their contacts with the Hellenic, Byzantine, and Oriental civilizations. Influences of these states and civilizations can be traced in the language, the art, the customs, and the material culture of Kievan Russia. The very formation of the Kievan state also was the culmination of a centuries-old internal development within Eastern Slavdom. Most of the contemporary scholars regard the Kievan princes as the direct successors of the princes of the Antes of whom we have some record as early as the

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fourth century.<sup>2</sup> Although the nature and the level of Eastern Slavic culture at the dawn of Russian history remains difficult to determine, one is not justified in regarding it as lower than that of the Scandinavian Vikings who started coming to Russia in the ninth century. It is worth noting that the Normans who came to Russia were evidently predominantly Swedes, and the Swedes were at the time the least cultured of the three Scandinavian nations.

The greatest cultural centers at the dawn of Russian history were the Byzantine and the Moslem empires, and both of them lay much closer to Kievan Russia than to Scandinavia. As a matter of fact, because a road from Sweden to Byzantium and the Orient lay through Russia, Russia exercised a considerable cultural influence on Scandinavia.<sup>3</sup> The Khazar state from which, according to most Normanists, only the Normans saved and could save the Eastern Slavs, was in many ways more civilized than the Normans themselves (e.g. the Normans were pagans, while the Khazars belonged to the Jewish faith, and their state evidently included a considerable number of Moslems and Christians). In the light of these facts, it is difficult to accept the validity of the claims often made by the Normanists, notably by Kunik and lately by Laehr, that the Normans saved Russia for the West and for civilization.<sup>4</sup> In the ninth century civilization was not on the side of the Normans.

Although it is very difficult to compare the relative cultural standing of the Eastern Slavs and the Scandinavians in the ninth century, the task becomes much easier in the succeeding centuries. Then Kievan Russia became one of the leading European states, both culturally and politically. Its culture was definitely inferior only to that of Byzantium, while Scandinavia still remained on the cultural periphery of Europe. Scandinavian sagas speak of Russia as of a

<sup>2</sup>Of course, the nature, the extent, and the exact significance of the culture inherited by the Kievan state from the preceding states in southern Russia raise many extremely complicated problems. The presence and the great significance of these influences is now, however, undeniable. The best books in English on this subject are M. Rostovtzeff, *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*, Clarendon Press, 1922 and G. Vernadsky, *Ancient Russia*, New Haven, 1943. The best general work in Russian is B. Grekov, *Kievskaya Rus*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1944.

<sup>3</sup>See, for instance, S. Syromiatnikov, "Drevlyanskii knyaz i varyazhskii vopros" in *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*, New Series, 1912, July, p. 133.

<sup>4</sup>E. Kunik, *Die Berufung der Schwedischen Rodsen durch die Finnen und Slawen*, Volume 2, Leipzig, 1845, pp. 282-284.

G. Laehr, *Die Anfänge des russischen Reiches. Politische Geschichte in 9 u 10 Jahrhundert*. Berlin, 1930, p. 43.

marvellously rich "land of cities." Whether we consider written law and written literature or coin stamping, we have to register their development in Kievan Russia a considerable time before their appearance in Scandinavia.

These few considerations should make it clear that the Normans could not lay the foundations of Russian culture or even exercise a great cultural influence upon Russia. They should also make one very suspicious of general Normanist claims on behalf of Scandinavian influence on Russian law, or a special Norman political ability, or even a superior Norman military organization. Unless concretely proved in specific instances, these claims are really no more valid than the earlier Normanist arguments for the Scandinavian origin of Sviatoslav on the ground that he was a great military leader.

Let us consider then some of the specific claims of Norman influence on Russian culture.

Among these perhaps the most significant is the claim of Scandinavian influence on the Russian language. Bayer, the originator of Normanism, did not know Russian, but thought that he had found a considerable number of Scandinavian words in the Russian language. By the middle of the nineteenth century about fifty Russian words were thought to be of Scandinavian origin. With the development of Russian philology and the investigations of Sreznevsky, Gedeonov, and others, the number of "Norman" words was further reduced. In 1877, Thomsen, a leading Normanist, laid claim to only sixteen. Even that proved to be excessive, and modern Normanists have further reduced the number. Moshin, for instance, has a list of six. It is obvious that some six words out of the total Kievan vocabulary of some ten thousand not only do not speak in favor of two centuries of Norman domination in Russia, but rather argue against the Normanist theory even in its mildest form. More Scandinavian words could be expected to pass into the Russian language through mere geographical proximity. In particular, it is interesting to note that old Russian words pertaining to navigation were often derived from the Greek, but never from the Scandinavian languages. Words dealing with trade were either Oriental or native Slavic.

The Normanists had relatively little to say on the subject of Kievan literature because written literature in Russia preceded written literature in Scandinavia and because the obvious influences in this field were those of Byzantium and Bulgaria. The only consistent claim has been made on behalf of the influence of Scandinavian epic literature on the subject matter of a few of the Russian epics. In

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particular, the tales of the death of Oleg, of the vengeance of Olga, and of Solovei Budimirovich are said to have been taken by Russian literature from the Scandinavian. Even these insignificant claims are highly questionable.<sup>5</sup>

Claims of Norman influence on Russian law have suffered a complete fiasco. While two centuries ago Scandinavian law was regarded as the foundation of Russian jurisprudence, by now it has been determined that no elements of Kievan law can be traced back to Norman prototypes. The reasons are obvious: "The Russian Law" of Yaroslav antedates Scandinavian codes of law and was meant for a society both more highly developed and different from that of Scandinavia. The whole matter is worth mentioning only because many books still contain statements to the effect that Norman law influenced Russian law without ever specifying the nature of that influence.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>As to the tale of Oleg, there is no reason to give priority to the Scandinavian story of Odd; the latter was written down in the fourteenth century, the former in the eleventh. The subject matter, death through a favorite horse, seems to be native to southern Russia rather than to Scandinavia. The parallel development of the two stories indicates influence of the Russian epic on the Scandinavian rather than vice versa. The story of Olga's vengeance, of burning a town by means of obtaining a tribute from it in birds, tying incendiary material to the birds, lighting it and setting the birds free, has been derived by some Normanists from a similar episode in the saga of Harold Hardrada. This, however, is hardly warranted because Olga lived prior to Harold Hardrada and because the specific episode is also to be found in various Western chronicles as well as in Genghiz Khan legends. Perhaps the earliest recorded appearance of the episode is in Titus Livy, in a story about Hannibal. Finally, the Norman origin of Solovei Budimirovich has been deduced from the fact that in the story he came on a ship from across the sea. His patronymic and the general contents of the story testify to the fact that he was a Slav from the Baltic or perhaps the White Sea shores.

"The Russian Law" has also been used by the Normanists to illustrate the alleged gulf in the Kievan society between the Slavic masses and the dominating Normans. Two articles of the code are significant in this connection. In an article dealing with penalties for murder the murder of a *slavyanin* and of a *ruskii lyudin* are specifically mentioned. The penalties for the two, however, are identical. The interpretation of the article hinges on the meaning of the *ruskii lyudin*. It seems that even if we are to accept the originally Norman derivation of *Rus*, by the eleventh century this term and others connected with it, including the *ruskii lyudin*, would refer to the Kievan state of the Rus and not to any Scandinavians. The *slavyanin* mentioned separately from the *ruskii lyudin* is probably ethnically connected with the north of Russia just as the *ruskii lyudin* is with the south. The other article states that the *Varyags* (regarded as Normans by most historians) and the *Kolbyaks* (regarded as Normans by Shakhmatov and a few others; other interpretations—an Eastern or a Finnish ethnic group) require only two supporting witnesses in court instead of the usual number of seven. This particular privilege tends



The Normanists began by asserting an all-important influence of Scandinavian religion on Kievan paganism. Perun, the chief deity of the Eastern Slavic pantheon, was allegedly derived from Thor, and the names of the entire Slavic Olympus were said to have been merely translated from the Norse. This claim, as dubious as it was easy to make because pagan religions are usually highly similar and comparable, was jeopardized by the discovery of a passage in Procopius, a sixth century Byzantine historian, in which the god of thunder is described as the supreme deity of the Antes. At present it is not only difficult to speak of any obvious Norman influence on Kievan paganism, but one has to note that a philological analysis of the Slavic pantheon yields the Iranian Khors, the Oriental Smiregl, and the Finnish Mokosh, but no Norman deity.

The Normanists also speak, and usually very vaguely, about the Norman influence on the organization of the Kievan court, on the clothing and the weapons of Kievan Russians, etc. Most of these statements sound particularly unsubstantiated when compared to the well established historical evidence, showing, for instance, Byzantine influence on the organization of the Russian Church (also some court titles, dresses, etc.), or Oriental influence on the Russian dress.

To sum up, one can safely say that Norman influence on Russian culture was practically negligible. There remains, however, the problem of the creation of the Kievan state and of the part played in it by the Normans. At present, it forms the crux of the Normanist controversy, and to it we shall turn our attention.

### III

The problem of the origin of the Kievan state is very closely connected with the *Rus* because the Kievan state was the state of the *Rus*. The Russian Primary Chronicle under the year A. D. 862 speaks briefly about the arrival of the *Rus* upon the invitation of the quarreling Slavic tribes of the Sloveni and the Krivichi and of some Finnish tribes:

They accordingly went overseas to the Varangian Russes: these particular Varangians were known as Russes, just as some are called Swedes, and others Normans, Angles, and Goths, for they were thus named. The Chuds, the

to indicate only that the Varyags and the Kolbyaks, probably a fluid, commercial element, had some difficulty finding witnesses, and that that was taken into account by the law.

Slavs and the Krivichians then said to the people of Rus "Our whole land is great and rich, but there is no order in it. Come to rule and reign over us!" They thus selected three brothers, with their kinsfolk, who took with them all the Russes and migrated. The oldest, Rurik, located himself in Novgorod; the second, Sineus, in Byeloozero; and the third, Truvor, in Izborsk. On account of these Varangians, the district of Novgorod became known as the land of Rus. The present inhabitants of Novgorod are descended from the Varangian race, but aforetime they were Slavs.<sup>7</sup>

The Normanists accepted the Chronicle verbatim, concluded that the Rus were a Scandinavian tribe or group, and proceeded to identify the *Rus-Ros-Rhos* of other sources with the Scandinavians. However, the problem soon became exceedingly complicated. The Scandinavian Rus could not be found in Scandinavia and was utterly unknown in the West.<sup>8</sup> Although the Chronicle referred primarily to Novgorod, Rus became identified with the Kievan state, and the very name came to designate the southern Russian state as distinct from the north, Novgorod included.<sup>9</sup> Still more important was the discovery that the Rus was known to some Byzantine and Oriental writers long before A. D. 862, and was evidently located in southern Russia. Finally, the Primary Chronicle itself came to be suspected and underwent a searching criticism.

One of the first problems which confronted the Normanists was to find the Scandinavian origin of the name *Rus*. Schloetzer referred to the Swedish district of *Roslagen*, but later it was pointed out that Roslagen acquired its present name only at the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Then the Normanists deduced *Rus* from *Ruotsi*, the Finnish name for the Swedes, which might have originated from the Swedish *rodsin*, *rodsmoen*, *droetsmoen*. The criticism of Lamansky, Gedeonov, and others made Kunik in 1875 abandon the former Swedish derivations of the Finnish *Ruotsi*.<sup>11</sup> He proceeded to derive *Ruotsi* from *Reidgotar*. Thomsen decided that the original word was *roper*,

<sup>7</sup>*The Russian Primary Chronicle, Laurentian Text*. Translated and edited with an introduction by S. Cross. Cambridge, 1930, p. 145.

<sup>8</sup>The mention of *Ros* in the Bertinian Annals in A.D. 839 only demonstrates that the imperial court was not acquainted with the Scandinavian *Ros* and became suspicious when it found out that Swedes were using that name.

<sup>9</sup>True, the Chronicle gives a rather questionable description of how Rus came from Novgorod to Kiev, but it does not explain at all why it disappeared from Novgorod.

<sup>10</sup>J. Ewers, *Kritische Vorarbeiten zur Geschichte der Russen*, 1814, pp. 119-120.

<sup>11</sup>Dorn, *Kaspii*, supplemented by A. Kunik, 1875. Supplement to *Zapiski Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*, p. 446.

ropsmen.<sup>12</sup> None of these Swedish originals proved to be entirely convincing, and Normanist Shakhmatov, who made a thorough study of the problem, had to conclude that "The origin of the name *Rus* remains obscure, in spite of the persistent efforts of scholars."<sup>13</sup> From the Finnish *Ruotsi* Thomsen and Shakhmatov derived the Russian *Rus* by analogy with *Suomi-sum*. This derivation implies the rather peculiar historical occurrence of one people (the Russians) accepting for themselves the name given to another people (the Swedes) by a third people (the Finns).

Because the Normanists regarded the Rus as a Scandinavian group, they proceeded to interpret all references to the Rus in Norman terms. The Bertinian Annals under the year A. D. 839 tell about the Ros ambassadors, who came to Ingelheim through Constantinople and who were the men of *khakan-Rus*, but who turned out to be Swedes. Some Normanists even concluded that the ambassadors must have come all the way from Sweden and twisted *khakan* to read *Haakon*.<sup>14</sup> But the Russian khaganate was probably located in southern Russia, and the title of khakan suggests Khazar rather than Norman influence. The early date made some Normanists (Shakhmatov, A. Vasiliev) advance the hypothetical arrival of the Scandinavian Rus into Russia from A.D. 862 to "approximately A.D. 840." A slight change in the original chronology also enabled the Normanists to regard as Scandinavians the Rus which staged its first attack on Constantinople and which was described on that occasion by patriarch Photius. In the tenth century bishop Liutprand of Cremona spoke of the *Russios* in his description of the neighbors of the Byzantine empire. A controversy still rages on whether Liutprand described his Russios as Normans or merely as a northern people.<sup>15</sup> Also in the tenth cen-

<sup>12</sup>Thomsen, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>13</sup>A. Shakhmatov, *Drevneishie sudby russkogo plemeni*, Petrograd, 1919, p. 52.

<sup>14</sup>M. Pogodin, "G. Gedeonov i ego sistema o proiskhozhdenii varyagov." In *Zapiski Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*, volume VI, 1865, pp. 73-84.

<sup>15</sup>The anti-Normanist interpretation seems to be better substantiated than the Normanist. Liutprand writes: "Constantinopolitana urbs habet ab Aquilone Hungaros Pizenacos, Russios, quos alio nomine nos Nortmannos apellamus, atque Bulgaros nimium sibi vicinos." And again "Gens quaedam est sub aquilonis parte constituta, quem a qualitate corporis Graeci vocant rusios, nos vero a positione loci nominamus nordmannos, lingua quippe Teutonum nord aquilo, man autem dicitur homo, unde et nordmannos aquilonares homines dicere possumus. Huius denique gentis rex vocabulo Inger erat, qui collectis mille et eo amplius navibus Constantinopolem venit." (Ewers, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139). It is more likely that Liutprand used *nordmannos* for geographical rather than for ethnic reasons. In the Middle Ages *nordmannos* did not necessarily denote Scandinavians (Riasanovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 626-627).

tury Constantine Porphyrogenitus in his *De Administrando Imperio* gave the names of seven Dnieper rapids "in Slavic" and "in Russian." As a group, the "Russian" names can be best explained from Scandinavian languages. This evidence of "the language of the Rus" is rather baffling: there is no other mention of any Scandinavian language of the Rus; on the contrary, the Chronicle itself states that the Slavic and the Russian languages are one. The Normanists were quick to point to the Scandinavian names in the treaties between Kievan Russia and Byzantium. The anti-Normanists challenged the Scandinavian derivation of many of the names, and stressed the fact that the treaties were written in Greek and in Slavic and that the Rus swore by Slavic deities.<sup>16</sup>

Arabic sources also mention and sometimes discuss and describe the Rus. Among them most important are the writings of Masudi, Ibn-Fadlan, Ibn-Khurdadbeh, and Ibn-Rusta. The statements of these authors have been interpreted in many ways by various Normanist and anti-Normanist scholars. In general the Rus of the Arabic authors is a numerous people rather than a Viking detachment ("a tribe of the Slavs" according to Ibn-Khurdadbeh). The Rus has numerous towns, and its ruler bears the title of *khakan*. True, the Rus is often contrasted with the Slavs. In itself, however, this is certainly not a proof of the Scandinavian origin of the Rus. The difference may be simply that between the Slavic Kievan state and the less organized Slavs, north (and sometimes west) of it. There was no concept of Slavic unity in the ninth century. Some of the customs of the Rus, as described by Eastern sources, appear definitely Slavic rather than Norman: such are the posthumous marriage of bachelors, the suicide of wives following the death of their husbands, and human sacrifices. The Rus of the Arabic authors lived most probably somewhere in southern Russia. Although Arabic sources refer primarily to the ninth century, the widespread and well-established relations of the Rus with the Orient at that time appear to testify to the fact that the Rus had already been acquainted with the East over a long period of time, an impossible situation if we are to regard the Rus simply as Normans.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup>The preceding paragraph barely mentions some sources and episodes of early Russian history which became basic for the Normanist controversy. Much material of a lesser significance is not even mentioned. All these matters are discussed at length in almost every book dealing with the origin of the Russian state. Among the most complete analyses are those of Kunik, Gedeonov, Thomsen, Moshin, and Riasanovsky.

<sup>17</sup>Riasanovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-285.

Other indications were found of an early existence of the Rus in southern Russia and of the ancient connection of the name *Rus-Ros* in its various forms with the Russian topography. In the second century A.D., Ptolemy used the word *Rha* to designate the Volga. Later it was referred to as *Ros*, *Rhos*. Gedeonov found over a dozen Slavic rivers the names of which appeared related to *Ros*. *Rousas* were known to an Armenian author of the fifth century, and *Hros* to Zacharias Rhetor (A.D. 555). Knauer pointed out that some Arabic authors knew Rus on the Volga prior to the year A.D. 713. At the end of the eighth century or the very beginning of the ninth the Rus attacked Surozh in the Crimea, and between 820 and 842 A.D. the Rus attacked Amastris on the southern shore of the Black Sea.<sup>18</sup> While the evidence for an early existence of the Rus in southern Russia was increasing, a critical analysis of the Primary Chronicle further challenged the simple derivation of the Rus from the Scandinavian north. In particular, the use of the term *Russes* in the first sentence of the Primary Chronicle came to be regarded by many scholars as a later interpolation. Now there are numerous non-Normanist derivations of the term *Ros-Rus*. Knauer stresses the ancient Aryan background and the name for Volga—*Rha*.<sup>19</sup> Vernadsky refers to the Iranian (Iranian-Slavic) tribe of *Rukhs-As*, *Roxolans*. Marr and some of his followers shifted the emphasis to a still darker past and spoke of the rôle of the Japhetides in the formation of the name and the people of the Rus.<sup>20</sup>

The Normanists reacted in a number of ways to the evidence of the antiquity of the Rus and its intrinsic connection with southern Russia. Sometimes they denied or challenged that evidence. Vasiliev, for instance, took issue with the arguments of Vasilevsky and denied the attacks of the Rus on Surozh and Amastris. The first he classified as apocryphal, the second as referring to the well-known campaign of Igor in A.D. 941.<sup>21</sup> Other Normanists, in order to account

<sup>18</sup>Riasanovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 236. Ewers, *op. cit.*, p. 216 ff. Vernadsky, *op. cit.*, p. 258 ff. S. Gedeonov, *Varyagi i Rus*, St. Petersburg, 1876, pp. 412-422.

<sup>19</sup>F. Knauer, "Der russische Nationalname und die indogermanische Urheimat." In *Indogermanische Forschungen*, 1912-1913, Volume 31, pp. 67-88.

<sup>20</sup>To the reader, who is not a philologist, the philological analysis of Marr and his followers appears much more impressive than the usually superficial constructions of the Normanists. For the extreme use of the former approach in dealing with the origin of the Russian state see N. Derzhavin, *Proiskhozhdenie russkogo naroda*, Moscow, 1944. The book has a number of obvious shortcomings from the historical standpoint.

<sup>21</sup>To appreciate the two sides of the controversy one should read V. Vasilevsky,



for all the events at the dawn of Russian history and to connect them with the Scandinavian north, postulated two and sometimes even three separate Scandinavian Rus (sometimes designating rather arbitrarily one Rus as Danish, another as Swedish). Their extremely complex and unverified schemes are unnecessary, unless one is to assume that the Rus could be nothing but Scandinavians. Vernadsky, in his reconstruction of the early period of Russian history, brought the Normans to the Black Sea shores as early as A.D. 740. His arguments are highly hypothetical, and his reasoning has not been generally accepted.

At the present time most specialists in the field of early Russian history think that the Normans formed merely one of the elements of the Rus, which was fundamentally connected with the natives of southern Russia and their gradual economic and political evolution. As to the philological derivation of the term *Rus*, a number of scholars are now inclined to accept the remarkable compromise solution offered by Brim. Brim recognized both the appearance of *Rus* from Scandinavia (through *Ruotsi*) and the southern derivation of *Ros*.<sup>22</sup> The two different forms still coexist, e.g. *russkii* (Russian) from *Rus*, *Rossia* (Russia) from *Ros*. Brim's theory has a strong appeal because of its inclusiveness, but it suffers from its dependence on the coincidental appearance of *Rus* and *Ros*, an unlikely coincidence because either of the two forms can be easily derived from the other.

In their discussion of the Scandinavian rôle in the formation of the Russian state, the Normanists emphasize the Scandinavian names of many representatives of the Rus in the treaties between Rus and Byzantium, and the Scandinavian origin of the Russian dynasty. The latter assertion is based principally on the Primary Chronicle and on the Norman names of the first Russian rulers (up to and excluding Sviatoslav).<sup>23</sup> By now the Primary Chronicle

"The Lives of St. George of Amastris and St. Stephen of Surozh" in *Collected works*, Volume three, 1915 and the chapter "The Life of George of Amastris and the Life of Stephen of Surozh" in A. Vasiliev, *The Russian Attack on Constantinople in 860*, Cambridge, 1946. For a criticism of Vasiliev's views see Riasanovsky, *op. cit.*, Appendix I.

<sup>22</sup>V. Brim, "Proiskhozhdenie termina Rus." In *Rossia i Zapad*, vol. I, 1923.

<sup>23</sup>Of course, the origin of the personal names of early Russian history has been bitterly disputed by various Normanists and anti-Normanists. One should see the article of Brutzkus mentioned above for one unorthodox view. The Normanist position in this case seems to be rather strong. There is, however, a pressing need for a new analysis of the names. Moshin, for instance, refers back to Thomsen, and Thomsen back to Kunik, that is to 1845. Kunik himself later saw the need for a new analysis and regarded his own as deficient and incomplete.

has been analyzed and criticized by numerous scholars. The most thorough critical analysis was made by Shakhmatov, himself a Normanist.<sup>24</sup> The critics threw new light on the obvious inadequacies of the narrative and discovered new failings in it. The suspiciously peaceful establishment of Riurik and his brothers in northern Russia was related to similar Anglo-Saxon and Irish stories, in particular to a passage in Widukind, to indicate, in the opinion of some, the mythical character of the entire "invitation of the Varangians." The fact that, due to considerations of age, Igor could hardly have been Riurik's son was demonstrated to have been just one of the difficulties the chronicler had in tying Novgorod and Kiev together. It was further pointed out that no Kievan sources anterior to the Primary Chronicle (early twelfth century) knew of Riurik.<sup>25</sup> In tracing the ancestry of Kievan princes they usually stopped with Igor. The Primary Chronicle is no longer regarded as a naive factual narrative, but rather as a work written with a definite tendency and probably for definite dynastic purposes. On the other hand, the Normanists argue rather plausibly that the Chronicle is still our best source concerning the origin of the Russian state and that its story, although incorrect in many details, is nevertheless an essentially faithful reflection of actual occurrences. There has been a considerable shift of opinion against Shakhmatov's extreme criticism.<sup>26</sup> At present most scholars believe that the first Russian dynasty of Igor, Vladimir, and Yaroslav was of Norman origin. It should be noted that the story of the calling of the Varangians does not become invalid even if we are to consider the Rus as belonging to southern Russia, and the contradictory references to the Rus in the Chronicle as later interpolations.

The lack of a Norman influence on Russian culture strongly suggests that at the dawn of Russian history the rôle of the Norman element, ruling or otherwise, was rather limited. There is no reason to believe that the institution of principedom was brought to Russia by the Normans. There are mentions of Antic princes going back to the fourth century. Kiy, Shchok, and Khoriv, the mythical founders of

<sup>24</sup>See the following works of A. Shakhmatov. "Skazanie o prizvanii varyagov." In *Izvestiya otdeleniya russkogo yazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk*. Volume IX, 1904. Book IV, pp. 284-365. *Razyskaniya o drevneishikh letopisnykh svodakh*, St. Petersburg, 1908. *Drevneishie sudby russkogo plemeni*, Petrograd, 1919.

<sup>25</sup>Riasanovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

<sup>26</sup>See, for instance, V. Mavrodin, *Obrazovanie drevnerusskogo gosudarstva*, Lenin-grad, 1945, pp. 66-67 and Cross, *op. cit.*, Introduction.

Kiev, are variously connected with the Turkish peoples, the Bulgars, the Khazars, the Magyars (especially through their sister Lybed), but certainly not with the Normans. In the tenth century Igor fought against Mal, a prince of the tribe of the Drevlianians. Treaties of Oleg and Igor with Byzantium mention local princes.

The Scandinavian element in Russia disappeared rather quickly. Treaties with Byzantium were written in Greek and in Slavic, and the Rus swore by Slavic deities to observe them. If the Norman element had been considerable, only its rapid Slavonization can explain the fact that it left no imprint on Russian culture and that the very existence of the great Russian kingdom ruled by Scandinavians passed unnoticed in Scandinavian literature. One certainly can not speak of the "two centuries of Norman domination" or of "the Swedish colonization" of Russia.

Opinion concerning the historical rôle of the Kievan princes has undergone a gradual but fundamental change. The older estimate, brilliantly developed by Kliuchevsky, which described the princes as above all leaders of military and trading expeditions and which laid an extremely heavy emphasis on the rôle of commerce and towns, has been largely replaced by the new view, best expounded by Grekov, which considers the Kievan princes and their immediate followers as the highest stratum of a gradually evolving society with an emphasis on agriculture and landed property. The Norman theory of the origin of the Russian state fits the former scheme much better than the latter.

#### IV

The Norman theory of the origin of the Russian state began as a flat assertion of an all-important Scandinavian rôle in the creation of Russia. The Slavs, it was claimed, provided merely the raw material, the Normans contributed the entire political and cultural element. From the very beginning of the discussion, the anti-Normanists rose to challenge the Normanist claims and often to deny any Scandinavian rôle in the formation of the Russian state. Two centuries of scholarship have demonstrated that the Norman influence on Russian culture was negligible, that Eastern Slavic history is much older and much richer than Schloetzer ever dreamt, that numerous non-Norman influences (e.g., of Byzantium and of the Oriental peoples of the steppes) were shaping Russian history for centuries prior to the arrival of the Normans and continued to do so long after the Normans were dissolved in the Slavonic mass. It also became

increasingly evident that the Normans had very little to contribute to Russia. The Russian state was created by centuries of history and by the numerous influences some of which were mentioned above, rather than by three Varangian brothers and their followers. Still the Normanists are correct in pointing out the presence of the Scandinavian element in Russia in the ninth, the tenth, and the eleventh centuries. They stress the Norman origin of the dynasty, the presence of Scandinavians as representatives of the Rus in Constantinople and Ingelheim, the catalytic nature of Norman activity on the great Russian plain. These then are the present limits of the controversy. Future studies should try to establish to what extent the Normans "determined the time and the geographical outline of the ancient Russian state"<sup>27</sup> and to what extent they represented merely a minor or even a superfluous element in the formation of that state.

<sup>27</sup>Mavrodin, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

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## Book Reviews

WERTH, ALEXANDER. *The Year of Stalingrad. A Historical Record and a Study of Russian Mentality, Methods and Policies.* New York, Knopf, 1947. 476 pp. \$5.00.

FISCHER, JOHN. *Why They Behave Like Russians.* New York, Harper & Brothers, 1947. 262 pp. \$2.75.

SNOW, EDGAR. *Stalin Must Have Peace.* Introduction by Martin Sommers. New York, Random House, 1947. 184 pp. \$2.50.

STERN, BERNHARD J. & SMITH, SAMUEL (editors). *Understanding the Russians.* New York, Barnes & Noble, 1947. 239 pp. \$2.75.

SIMMONS, ERNEST J. (editor). *USSR: A Concise Handbook.* Ithaca, N. Y., Cornell University Press, 1947. 494 pp. \$4.50.

The volumes here grouped for review differ widely in scope and purpose. The first two are primarily studies of short segments of recent Soviet history. The third is concerned with setting forth the current Soviet attitudes. The last two are handbooks which purport to give in handy form the basic truths about the U.S.S.R., its people, its policies, and its actions.

Mr. Werth's book is in many ways the most valuable of this set but it is likely to be the least read because of its price, its length (much of it is in very small type), and its detail. The year of Stalingrad is, of course, 1942 and Mr. Werth deals with it week by week, sometimes day by day from June forward. Much space is given to descriptions, often by Red Army spokesmen, of

the progress of the great Stalingrad battle. Interwoven with this are Werth's impressions of Russia, especially of Moscow, during these months. Particularly interesting and valuable are his analyses of the changing lines of war propaganda.

The major lines, apparent at the end of 1941, were hatred of the Nazis, Russian nationalism and sentimentalism. Later the themes of the second front and of *Patrie en danger* were introduced. After the fall of Rostov there was an all-out drive for tighter discipline ("Officers' order is an iron law") and a more courageous fight. The latter went far beyond words—to summary executions, in fact. Agitation over the second front reached a high pitch by October, decisive weeks at Stalingrad, and did not subside with our North African landings which the Soviets did not regard as a true second front. Mr. Werth traces all these themes (and others) with care. His reporting of them is all the more valuable because few of us have access to the originals.

On one point, however, issue may be taken. Mr. Werth is sure that the emphasis upon Russian nationalism was only an opportunistic and temporary tactic. It is of course true that in 1943 and after, increasing attention was paid in the Soviet press to the non-Russian groups, but still more recent evidence indicates that the emphasis upon Russia has not been dropped. A recent article in *Pravda* chided Soviet history teachers for not pointing out that the Russian people played a leading part both in the Revolution and in the building of the U.S.S.R.



Greater emphasis upon the Russian contributions, as opposed to those of the non-Russian nationalities, was demanded.

Mr. Hanson Baldwin has suggested that perhaps the battle of Moscow rather than that of Stalin-grad was the decisive turning point. Other objections might be raised over details, but, by and large, Mr. Werth's study is a worthwhile contribution. One cannot imagine a careful historian attempting to write of this period without making considerable use of *The Year of Stalin-grad*.

Mr. Fischer's on-the-spot acquaintance with the U.S.S.R. was limited to two months in the Ukraine during the spring of 1946, when he served with the UNRRA mission. His book, however, does not belong to the hit-and-run school because Mr. Fischer has long been a student of Russia and served as a Russian specialist with the B.E.W. during the war. He was, therefore, very much better equipped to observe and report than are most visitors and correspondents.

He opens with the thesis that a sense of fear is a dominating fact in Soviet policy. This "national fear neurosis" springs from the Politburo and is compounded of personal anxiety, the memory of invasions, a realization of "the country's enfeebled position," and the logic of the Marxist doctrine. A considerable responsibility for this attitude he attributes to successive incidents manufactured by the secret police in order to maintain their reputation and position.

Apprehension certainly plays a part in shaping Soviet policy just as it does here, but Mr. Fischer rides the thesis much too hard. As a matter of fact, in the course of his de-

tailed description of life and work in the Soviet Union, he not infrequently minimizes and even contradicts his original assumption.

Aside from this, *Why They Behave Like Russians* (an unfortunate title) contains much sound reporting and shrewd flashes of insight. Mr. Fischer clearly recognizes that the "iron curtain" is a two way affair and that the most dangerous part is the one which keeps information out of Russia. He properly credits the majority of Communists with sincere devotion to an ideal, and just as properly recognizes that "to them, democracy means government for the people" but not by the people. His chapter, "The Classless Society, Kind Of," is an effective antidote to the deliberate propaganda of the Party and to the uninformed prattlings of some fellow-travelers.

Mr. Fischer rejects both appeasement and "preventive war" as a means of dealing with the Soviets. He is opposed to supporting reactionary cliques simply because they protest their anti-communism. He recognizes the possibility of future peace as well as of future war and urges that we must be genuinely ready for either. Tact, forbearance, firmness, and understanding are the tools we must use to maintain the present truce and to build toward peace. But the crux of the problem lies with us and not with the Russians. If we can make our system work, if we can avoid another great depression, if we will labor to achieve the "American way"—then we have successfully met the challenge. With this conclusion there can be little quarrel.

Mr. Fischer's approach is neither pro-Soviet nor anti-Soviet. He looks at the problem from an Amer-

ican bias and seeks to understand the Soviets not for their sake but for our own. Mr. Snow's little book does not give the same impression. He seems more concerned with the pro- and anti-Soviet problem. This was not necessarily his intention, which seems to have been to show how things looked from Moscow. Certainly his most vigorous chapter is the one called "As It Looks to Ivan Ivanovitch."

Mr. Snow's Ivan is, he says, just an "average Russian—not the bureaucrat, the Kremlin, or the Party zealot." If Mr. Snow is correct in this, the Party's program of indoctrination has been one hundred per cent successful because his Ivan speaks like an article in *Sputnik Agitatora*. Russo-American difficulties, Mr. Snow suggests, do not spring from Ivan's attitudes *per se* but are an outgrowth of the failure of John American to understand what Ivan means and wants.

According to Mr. Snow, such misunderstanding is primarily semantic, and if John would only take the trouble to read the official Soviet definitions of "democracy," or "collaboration," or "fascist" then he would understand Ivan and, presumably, all would be well. Now there is no question that semantic misunderstandings have produced friction nor that most Americans are very ill-informed about the U.S.S.R., but the problem of American-Soviet relations are not susceptible to so simple a solution.

Finally, Mr. Snow's formula for getting along with the Soviets (direct negotiation, economic collaboration, collective security, a common political program, and cultural exchange) glibly presupposes immediate and whole-hearted Russian co-operation and acceptance of all

these points. One gathers that in Mr. Snow's view our difficulties with the Soviets are entirely our own fault.

Messrs. Stern and Smith have also set out to teach us how to understand the Russians, but their method is different. Mr. Snow created his Ivan; they use real persons as spokesmen. In their own estimation they "... have assembled in this volume materials written by outstanding students of Soviet life and culture. [The] main purpose," they continue, "has been to provide significant evidence for those who are sincerely eager to learn the truth about the Soviet people." (p. v) To this end they have collected some scattered materials of interest and value including: the Stalin-Howard interview; official Soviet explanations of government and elections in the U.S.S.R. excerpts from the 1939 census, the 1945 budget, and the Fourth Five Year Plan.

That these items, and the book in general, contain some of the truth about the Soviets is undeniable. But to imply, as both authors and publishers do, that here is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth is arrant nonsense and worse. At least four-fifths of the book's fifty-one articles are wholly uncritical, using that word in the scholarly sense. Sixteen are official or semi-official statements—ten of them being reprints from the Embassy propaganda bulletin. This is not objectionable because the bias is clearly apparent. On the contrary these articles have considerable value in revealing the official line. The same cannot be said for those which are presented as accurate and impartial statements of fact. Where is the truth in the

statement by Professor Harry Ward (p. 27) that "In fact the Soviet system is a non-party state. . . ." How does one reconcile with historical fact Mr. Mandel's dictum (p. 29) that all parties other than the Bolshevik ". . . placed themselves beyond the pale by armed rebellions which come under the heading of treason. . . ." There is no need to labor the point further.

Professor Simmon's volume, considerably more ambitious and generally of much higher quality than the Stern-Smith book, grew out of the 1943/1944 Cornell Russian programs. The articles appeared originally in the *Encyclopedia Americana*. This makes it convenient for the reader and impossible for the reviewer. Who can claim sufficiently encyclopedic knowledge of the U.S.S.R. to pass qualified and detailed judgments upon articles which deal with geography, political science, the social sciences, and "the humanities and science"? Generalities alone are possible save in one's own field.

Despite several excellent and scholarly articles—notably by Sir Bernard Pares and John Hazard—the general tone of the book is pro-Soviet. The bibliographies, for example, while they do not wholly omit critical accounts, consistently give overwhelming prominence to uncritically sympathetic sources. At least fifteen of the twenty contributors are pro-Soviet in varying degree, although it should at once be added that they have generally held their enthusiasms in greater restraint than is their custom. The result, however, is a lack of balance that is most distressing in what Professor Simmons refers to as a "basic, factual survey."

Much of the material presented is,

perforce, historical in nature although it is not so labeled. The section which bears the title of "history" is placed, curiously, under the heading of political science. Even more curiously it was assigned not to a professional historian, but to Mr. Kazakevich, who undertook the staggering task of compressing all of Russian history from the second millennium B.C. down to 1945 into 74 pages. It is pleasant to report that he did an excellent and frequently brilliant job of condensation at least down to the twentieth century and it would be petty to blame him for faults inherent in his task. His treatment of the revolutions and of the Soviet régime (to which he devotes roughly a third of his space) leave rather more to be desired. Trotzky's rôle, for example, gets scant attention except for condemnation. No mention is made of his creation of the Red Army but he is accused of mistakes in the 1919 campaign against Denikin and in the 1920 campaign against Warsaw. The Nazi-Soviet Pact, which Mr. Kazakevich specifically denies was an alliance, is explained as wholly the fault of the British and French. The Russo-Finnish War of 1939/1940 is mentioned only as a "local war" which ended in peace as soon as the Red Army had broken through the Karelian fortifications.

But Mr. Kazakevich's closing sentences are his most remarkable. "After the liberation of Poland and the Balkans . . . the last big battle took place before Berlin . . . with the largest concentration of tanks and artillery yet achieved by the Red Army. Berlin was taken (May 1, 1945) and a week later Germany surrendered unconditionally." His clear implication is closer to the official Soviet line than to history.

A valuable corrective to Mr. Kazakevich's account of World War I and the first 1917 Revolution is provided by Sir Bernard Pares' excellent but brief sketch of "Russia in the First World War." Professor Hazard's article on "Jurisprudence" is most useful, and Professor Schuman's résumé of American-Soviet relations is also of value. The latter's discussion of "Government and Politics" however, is open to challenge on several points of interpretation.

On the whole, and in spite of certain distinct merits in both the Simmons and Stern-Smith volumes, one must conclude that neither qualifies as an impartial source.

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SOMERVILLE, JOHN. *Soviet Philosophy*. New York, Philosophical Library, 1946. 269 pp. \$3.75.

In *Soviet Philosophy*, Dr. Somerville professes to give an objective account of Soviet philosophy as it is expounded by Soviet philosophers. To accomplish this end, he begins with historical materialism and finishes with the dissemination and teaching of Soviet philosophy in the Soviet schools. In so far as this book is an exposition of views held today by Stalin and his disciples in the Soviet Union, it is correct enough. But it is more than merely an "exposition of Soviet philosophy," or a compilation of "accurate or useful information," as asserted by its author. It is a *defense* of the Stalinist conception of dialectical materialism, as the philosophy of Marxism is called, not of dialectical

materialism as understood by other Marxists.

As Dr. Somerville rightly insists, an honest, objective exposition of Soviet philosophy is sorely needed today, even if written by an open apologist for the Soviet way of life. But it ought to be objective; it ought to tell all the essential facts—the causes and arguments for a police state, the necessity for permanent terrorism, the need for an iron discipline in doctrine and for purging those elements which refuse to accept an iron discipline of idea. The ignorant should not be seduced into believing that the conflicts which developed over art, pedagogy, and philosophy were not part and parcel of the struggles of Stalin against the Left and the Right Oppositions and their remnants in the Soviet Union and that those who remained obdurate in their convictions lost their jobs, were exiled to Siberia or a Labor camp, or even executed.

The justification of the iron control of art, morals, pedagogy, and philosophy itself ought to be an honest defense, not an attempt, by misrepresentation and equivocation, to prove that Soviet philosophy is free without being free; that even if it is not free, it is still right as against bourgeois philosophy, even though the latter *is* free.

Here it is possible to mention only a few of Dr. Somerville's misrepresentations.

In stating the difference between Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky on the question of the building of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., Dr. Somerville says that Lenin and Stalin differed from Trotsky in believing that Socialism could be victorious in one country. Trotsky, on the other hand, did not believe that Socialism was possible

except on a world-wide basis. Dr. Somerville concludes his historical picture by saying that Stalin so far modified Lenin in 1938 as to insist that Communism is possible in a single country, except for the *single* exception of the existence of the state.

This historical picture does not tally with the known facts. In the first place, Communism is that stage in which the state, the "apparatus of state force," has disappeared; Socialism is that stage of the classless society in which the state is still maintained. That this is how these terms are interpreted can easily be ascertained from a pamphlet by Lenin, *State and Revolution*, which Dr. Somerville himself quotes. Yet he fails to make the correction.

In the second place, there was no difference between Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin on the victory of Socialism in a single country—at least, until after the death of Lenin. In 1924, a difference arose between Stalin and Trotsky over whether a Socialist country could exist indefinitely at peace with Capitalism. There was never any question about the necessity of building the Socialist society in the Soviet Union. Trotsky was, in fact the first to have pushed the idea of a five-year plan to build Socialism.

In the chapter called "Our Universe," Dr. Somerville explains the three dialectical laws. He is careful, however, *not* to state them in the precise sense in which they have traditionally been and are still interpreted even in the Soviet Union. He states them in so generalized a form that any scientifically minded person can accept them. The law of opposites is stated as the law that everything changes, *not* that

everything exemplifies the conflict between two contrary or polar principles or forces. The law of transformation of quantity into quality is stated as the law that new qualities replace old qualities by a series of the same qualitative accretions, *not* that every quality changes into its opposite or polar quality by an accumulation of changes of quantity (whatever this exactly means). Lastly, the law of the negation of negation is defined as the law that qualitative changes go on endlessly, *not* that the same quality reappears, on a new level, after it is negated. Thus the very questions which have been the subject of controversy among Marxists and between Marxists and non-Marxists are carefully excluded in this allegedly objective account of Soviet Philosophy.

At the end of this chapter, Dr. Somerville adds that these dialectical laws are not "laws" after all in the scientific sense like the laws of entropy or gravitation. No predictions can be made from them; they are only a "guide to activity and scientific research, not a dogma." (p. 177) How a law of nature can be a *dogma* is something in itself incomprehensible; but in what way these laws, as laws of universal processes, are merely a "guide to activity and scientific research" is even more incomprehensible. If they are laws of processes like the law of gravitation, then predictions should be possible by means of them; if not, then they are simply conventions, rules which humans employ, as they employ Occam's razor, in order to guide them in thought and action. Actually, however, the dialectical laws are neither laws in any scientific sense nor rules of scientific procedure. They are



metaphysical abstractions, dogmas, to denounce any criticism which conflicts or leads to conflict with the international party line.

After a long early exegesis (Chapter II) in which Dr. Somerville insists that Soviet philosophers are free to think, he inadvertently admits that there is no freedom to think and apologizes on page 243 for its non-existence by saying that Soviet thinkers "invoke the fact that the Soviet regime was faced" with all kinds of dangers from within and without, dangers which have not yet disappeared; thus "a normal condition of acceptance and security, especially in its international dealings, has not been attained." Yet he apparently finds it unnecessary to explain why these difficulties should harass the U.S.S.R. today when it considers itself the strongest and most stable power in the world.

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PALENCIA, ISABEL DE. *Alexandra Kollontay*. New York, Longmans, Green, 1947, 309 pp. \$3.50.

Madame de Palencia, one-time Minister of republican Spain to the Scandinavian countries, has written what is intended to be a biography of Alexandra Kollontay, first Soviet Ambassadors to Norway, Sweden, and Mexico. The book is in fact a romantic characterization of the author's friend, and a eulogistic account of Madame Kollontay's work. The treatment of the historical events in which the Soviet diplomat participated is unfortunately often both superficial and misleading.

Madame Kollontay, who was a revolutionary in the nineties, advocate of the feminist movement, first Soviet woman Commissar of Social Welfare, and the first Russian woman diplomat, is undoubtedly a most talented individual. Well-read, fluent in several languages, Madame Kollontay was able to adapt herself to all circumstances. Her revolutionary nature, radical inclinations, enthusiasm, and acquaintance with European culture fitted her well for the fiery, early years of the Russian Revolution. Although most of her earlier political associates suffered defeat and were "liquidated," Madame Kollontay continued her career intermittently as long as her health permitted. Belonging first to the Menshevik group, Madame Kollontay did not completely join in with Lenin until 1915. Even in the early period of the Bolshevik rule, she was often in opposition to the general party-line, as, for example, during the ratification of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty in March, 1918, and later, in 1921, during the period of the heated Bolshevik discussions over the rôle of trade unions in the Soviet state. The author does not mention these political vacillations, of her friend.

Perhaps the least successfully presented section of the book is that dealing with the revolutionary period of Mme. Kollontay's activities. The author's description of the October Revolution as a "hard-earned victory" (p. 87) hardly agrees with the facts. The account of the convention of the Constituent Assembly and the coming to power of the Bolsheviks (pp. 86-87) is largely misleading. It is incorrect to speak of Molotov and Stalin as prominent members of the Soviet Union in the first years of the Soviet

régime (p. 174). Stalin was still in the background at that time, while the name of Molotov was almost never mentioned. The author errs in stating that Soviet foreign policy of that period was made by Lenin and Litvinov. Actually, the leading man in Soviet foreign affairs, apart from Lenin, was Chicherin. Even writing of later events, Mme. de Palencia often errs in dates. The date of the Norwegian recognition of the Soviet Union was February 15, 1924, rather than February 15, 1926. Equally unchecked is the information about Mme. Kollontay's supposed ancestor, St. Dovmont, a "monk" of Pskov monastery, who, according to the author, was "instrumental in establishing the use of the Russian alphabet rather than the Greco-Slavic throughout Russia." (pp. 9-10). Actually, St. Dovmont was never a monk, but a Lithuanian prince, who, because of his just rule over the Pskovians and his kindness to the poor, was canonized after his death and buried in the Pskov monastery. The modernization of the Russian alphabet took place during Peter the Great's rule and not in the thirteenth century when Prince Dovmont lived.

Numerous errors of spelling occur. The "libertarian Streves" should probably read "Struve" (p. 38), while the general strike of 1905 originated in St. Petersburg and not in Moscow. A more serious and amusing mistake is the assertion that those nearest to Lenin liked to call him—apparently all in one gulp—Nikolai Vladimír Ilich (p. 115).

The author devotes several chapters to Mme. Kollontay's work for women. As Commissar of Social Welfare, Kollontay devoted much of her time to the problems of child care and social status of

women. She attempted to enlighten and reform womankind in general. Her efforts were threefold. First, she endeavored to draw women into constructive work of the new state which aimed at emancipating women from the drudgery of petty household tasks. Next, she dealt with family problems, advocating the shifting of the burden of child-care from the mother to the state. Finally, she dealt with the problem of the relations of the sexes. In accordance with Lenin's program, Mme. Kollontay aimed "to clear the ground of the lumber in the old bourgeois law and institutions" insofar as woman's status in the family and society was concerned. Unfortunately, she tried to emancipate woman from all her past duties and restraints before there had been created a "new and higher communist mentality."

In her account of the book by Meisel-Hess on *Die Sexuelle Krise*, Mme. Kollontay dwelt at length on the function of "love-play" as a substitute for "big-love." In order that "big-love" be achieved, humanity must pass through a long ennobling "school of love." It is no wonder that Kollontay's friend describes her as "la dernière grande amoureuse."

In spite of the author's failure to present an unbiased picture of the life, activities, and theories of her friend, and despite the shortcomings in the treatment of the Russian historical situation, Mme. Palencia's book provides fascinating reading. It is evident, however, that a definitive biography of Mme. Kollontay has yet to be written.

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STRAKHOVSKY, LEONID I. *Alexander I of Russia. The Man Who Defeated Napoleon*. New York, Norton, 1947. 302 pp. \$3.50.

Russian history from the Pseudo-Demetrius of the Time of Trouble to the alleged Grand Duchess Anastasia of our own days does not lack personages whose true identity has intrigued lovers of historical riddles. A Siberian hermit Fedor Kuzmich who died in 1864, but about whose life prior to 1837 nothing is definitely known, is one of these mysterious characters. His features supposedly strongly resembled those of Alexander I, in spite of a beard which half covered his face. He was visited by some people of high standing, he was known to the Imperial family, and, as a result, a legend was born. It was said that Alexander I did not die in 1825, that somebody else was buried in his place while Alexander himself disappeared to live under an assumed name, and that the hermit Fedor Kuzmich in reality was the former Emperor of Russia. After the Revolution of 1905 the legend received wide publicity, and an animated discussion arose in regard to the identity of Fedor Kuzmich. In 1923 K. V. Kudriashov published a scholarly work in which he critically examined all available evidence, and his findings apparently destroyed the legend. A distinguished Russian historian, A. E. Presniakov, in his monograph on Alexander I, published in 1924, accepted the views of Kudriashov. But the opening of the tomb of Alexander I in 1926 again stirred popular imagination because the tomb was found empty. A new discussion followed, and the book of Dr. Strakhovsky represents the latest attempt to revive the legend.

In this book Dr. Strakhovsky

describes the circumstances of Alexander's upbringing, his relations with his father and the death of the latter at the hands of conspirators, an event which remained a dark spot in Alexander's life. He tells further of the marriage and love affairs of Alexander (strongly hinting that Alexander's affection for his sister Catherine was not of a brotherly kind), of his various friendships, of his domestic policies, of his struggle with Napoleon and his European policies. In his narrative the author subtly traces the growing moodiness and religious restlessness of the Emperor and prepares the reader for the acceptance of the eventual escape of Alexander from court life and his transformation into the recluse Fedor Kuzmich. One may congratulate Dr. Strakhovsky on the literary and dramatic skill with which he brings his story to the final climax. To strengthen the validity of his contentions, Dr. Strakhovsky adds an appendix, consisting of the author's note and excerpts from various sources. This material would be more convincing if it did not represent second or even third hand evidence. For instance, Mrs. Dubasov relates what she heard from General Balinsky, who in turn received the information from his father (excerpt 2). Professor Gruzdyov relates that according to the nephew of Professor Martens the latter knew some irrefutable documents (excerpt 3), etc. The bibliography accompanying the book is very extensive (pp. 274-292), but some important items such as Presniakov's *Alexander I* (Leningrad, 1924) are missing. In the absence of footnotes it would be desirable if the author indicated such sources of information as proved to be particularly indis-

pensable for his work. The index is very satisfactory. The publishers, W. W. Norton and Company have presented the book in a very attractive form.

GEORGE LANTZEFF

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PRATT, HELEN GRAY and MOORE, HARRIET. *Russia, A Short History*. New York, John Day, 1947. 282 pp. \$4.00.

This book appeared first a decade ago under the title of *Russia: From Tsarist Empire to Socialism*, by Helen Pratt. The present edition, slightly revised, was augmented by two additional chapters contributed by Harriet L. Moore. To cover a subject as vast as the Russian land itself within the frame of 282 pages is an historical venture dared by few.

In a mellifluous style the authors display a propensity toward some sweeping interpretations and assumptions. Thus we learn that droughts, suffering, and famine that frequently recur in Russia "helped to make the peasant fatalistic, accepting any misfortune as unavoidable and unescapable." But there is no evil without good, as the Russian would say, for the same misfortunes that aided in making the peasant a fatalist also helped to strengthen the influence of religion in his life, according to the authors.

The book contains pages of quotations from as wide a range as the medieval poem of *The Tale of Igor's Host* to the Great Stalin Five Year Plan; many of these quotations are of considerable length, extending to as much as six pages. Soviet Russia is treated with "academic warmth and sympathy," but not "with a

party line orientation." There is a tendency to deviate from official interpretations; to close at times the eye on some unsavory facts and emphasize more favorable things, though not throughout the book. For the sake of historical truth one is gratified, for instance, to discover that instead of minimizing the rôle of Trotsky and only pointing out to the nefarious part he played in the revolution, the authors credit him with the founding of the Red Army.

From this brief account of Russian history one derives at times at least one consoling fact—something not to be overlooked in these days—that the writers are not completely destitute of historical integrity. At a time when propaganda is directed with special acuity and is apt to distort the picture of Russia's past, it is gratifying to come across some historians who have the courage to swim against the current. The book is too concise to be considered as either a textbook or a source of information, but as a supplement to the former it is adequate and highly recommended.

ANATOLE G. MAZOUR

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GRUNWALD, CONSTANTIN DE. *La vie de Nicholas Ier*. Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1946. 309 pp. Frs. 225.

The author of this volume is practically unknown on this side of the Atlantic, although he has published four books of his own, aside from two volumes of translations. His *La vie de Metternich* was crowned by the French Academy and one of his books, on Stein, *Stein—l'ennemi de Napoléon* was re-

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published in America in an English translation.

Mr. de Grunwald was born and educated in Russia. He has lived abroad since the 1917 Revolution. His French is excellent. It is rarely that a foreigner succeeds in mastering French literary style to such perfection, as did de Grunwald.

In his preface, the author explains the reasons for his writing during these days of flux and rapid change a book on an emperor who stood out like a rock against the *Zeitgeist*. He is convinced that the U.S.S.R. stems from Nicholas I's Russia to the same extent as France of Hoche and Carnot stems from the France of Louis XIV. Nicholas I's personality is of particular interest, he thinks, because in him "absolutism revealed itself in its purest form."

The volume is not an attempt at a history of Nicholas I's reign like Th. Schiemann's well-known work. It is a biography, with an emphasis on the psychological traits of the Tsar and the environment in which he lived and acted.

De Grunwald says that he has taken Nicholas I "such as he was, the son of his period, the son of his environment." A trained historian, aware of the difficulties of emulating Ranke's admirable self-confidence, might hesitate to commit himself to such a statement. The author, who is not a trained social scientist, takes his stand on this and quotes Prince Lubomirski, the Pole, who was Nicholas I's page, and later his political enemy that the emperor was: "a peculiar mixture of defects and qualities, of smallness and greatness, brutality and chivalry, courage bordering on recklessness and pusillanimity skirting cowardliness, justice and tyranny, generos-

ity and cruelty, was fond of ostentation, and given to austerity at the same time."

It is possible that the author's attitude to the U.S.S.R. may have some connection with the choice of the Russian autocrat for the subject of his volume. He speaks of the Soviet Union as a "land which has succeeded in reconciling the principle of sound justice with order and authority." This accent on authority may be the cue. Certainly, Nicholas could not be accused of permitting his authority to be infringed upon. He enforced what he considered order, with ruthless tenacity.

The author has done some original research for his volume in the Vienna archives and has used some unpublished documents in the preparation of it. He has also diligently studied Soviet publications bearing on Nicholas I and his epoch. The Austrian archive material, while interesting, does not seem to add anything of real importance to the already known historical picture.

Nicholas I fares better at the hands of de Grunwald than he did in those of Russian radical and liberal writers in the past. The execution of the five Decembrists and the exile and banishment of a few hundred others came as a great shock to the Russian nineteenth century society, as well as to the liberals in Western Europe. The rigid censorship, the heavy-footed interference of the police state into everyday life, and its attempts at the regulation of the education and of the intellectual life of Russia in the interests of autocracy were abhorrent to the liberal and radical elements the world over. Since 1917 executions and exile have become a feature of Soviet life to such an



extent that Nicholas I's terror seems very mild indeed by comparison with the current practice. Censorship and regulation of education in the direction desirable to the ruling group has also established itself as a characteristic of the cultural life of the U.S.S.R., so that similar (and much less effective) measures adapted in the past, lost their ability to shock, or even to surprise students of Russia's history.

The opening chapter of the book, dealing with the Decembrist rebellion, shows Nicholas I calm and resourceful. His intrepid behaviour is markedly stressed, contrary to the well-known tendency to depict him as timorous and lacking in decisiveness. The author describes Nicholas I as anxious to avoid bloodshed on the first day of his reign. De Grunwald goes out of his way to describe how averse the Emperor was to giving orders to fire upon the rebels in the Senate Square.

The author pays a great deal of attention to the education of the future Emperor and seems to assign a very important rôle to the methods of his education in shaping the character and the pattern of behavior of Nicholas I. It would appear that whenever his interest was aroused, Nicholas was a good student, but his interests were very narrow.

Nicholas I was a virtuous (in the conventional sense) and a well-balanced man, the author thinks a realist who was entirely lacking in creative ability (one would like to add, in imagination). His worst defect was the lack of a clear understanding of the limits of his powers. As Miss Tiutchev wrote, Nicholas I sincerely thought himself able to see

everything with his own eyes, to hear everything with his own ears, and to regulate everything according to his own understanding and knowledge.

The fateful suppression of the Hungarian revolution by the Russian army is briefly referred to. The author mentions Nicholas' indignation at the execution by the Austrians of the thirteen Hungarian generals, who had surrendered to the Russians. Nicholas thought that this was an infamy and an insult to him.

The analysis of the causes of the Crimean war is along Marxist lines. The causes of the conflict go beyond the personality of Nicholas I and the acts of his government. They are grounded in the conflict between two kinds of imperialism: the Russian—primitive, instinctive, with its roots still deep in its past, and the Western-industrialized, mechanised, struggling for new markets and new spheres of influence. According to de Grunwald, Karl Marx was the only contemporary, who saw the full scope and significance of that conflict. He also quotes Mrs. de Nesselrode's sally that Europe could not reconcile herself to the inexcusable lack of tact on the part of Russia in being a great power.

This is the weakest part of the volume. The author is apparently not acquainted with such works as F. W. Temperley's or those by A. A. Zaionchkov. Neither Vernon J. Puryear's, nor Tarlé's monumental studies were known to him. The rôle of Napoleon III in precipitating the war is not understood by the author. Very likely conditions under which the author wrote his book explain these shortcomings. Nevertheless, it is fairly clear that he is not a well-trained historian and

while he has read a great deal (mostly in French and Russian), he was not familiar with the whole ambit of literature on the Crimean war. The same lack of general historical background is also noticeable in the several excursions de Grunwald makes into Russian history ante-dating the era of Nicholas I.

These flaws do not, however, detract seriously from a vivid and colorful portrait of the proud Tsar which emerges from the volume's pages.

The volume should be of considerable interest not only to students of Russian history but to the general reading public as well. It is to be hoped that in preparing the book for publication, in America or in England, the pages on the origins of the Crimean war will be revised to take note of the up-to-date knowledge of that event.

D. FEDOTOFF WHITE

Philadelphia, Pa.

FEDOTOV, G. P., *The Russian Religious Mind*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1946. 438 pp. \$6.00.

It is almost a commonplace to say that Russian culture is deeply rooted in religion. But until now no work was available which gave the religious element in the history of Russian culture an adequate treatment. Secular historians, says Professor Fedotov in his Introduction, "had no key to religious problems" and thought that qualifications such as "Christian, ecclesiastical, monastic, etc.," met all requirements. Ecclesiastical historians "accepted without criticism" the idea that "everything which is es-

sential in Orthodox life is eternal and changeless," thus making impossible a really historical approach to Russia's religious development.

Professor Fedotov's purpose is therefore to accomplish a task neglected by former historians, namely to write a history of Russia's spiritual life. The volume under review, the first in a planned series of five, reconstructs and makes intelligible and appealing the religious mind of Russia in the course of the Kievan period of her history, from her Christianization (A.D. 988) to the Tartar invasion (second quarter of the 13th century). The religious mind is contrasted by the author with the objective elements of religion, such as dogmas, Church organization, and liturgy; these elements have received sufficient attention on the part of his predecessors, and very considerably he decided not to duplicate their efforts. What he is interested in, is "the religious man and his attitude toward God, the world and his fellow men."

The enterprise is a difficult one, but Fedotov is well qualified to achieve it. For 15 years Professor of the Russian Theological Institute in Paris, the author of many scholarly works, among them *The Saints of Ancient Russia* and *Russian Spiritual Songs*, he was able to base his new contribution on an exhaustive study of all the literary sources available, both ecclesiastical and secular. After an introductory chapter on Russia's pre-Christian paganism and another on Religious Byzantinism, in other words, on the two elements from the blending of which early Russian Christianity emerged, he passes in review the writings of the Russian Byzantinists, works reflecting Russian kenoticism, as well as those offering

ascetic ideals or emphasizing the eschatological phase of religion. Then he offers an extremely interesting chapter on "the ritualism of the clergy" and two chapters on "the religion of the laity." These studies are followed by a penetrating analysis of the religious content of the early Chronicles and especially of *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, a heroic poem comparable to the *Chanson de Roland*. A chapter is devoted to the study of the survivals of paganism in Kievan Russia. In a long Conclusion the author presents a masterful synthesis of the findings of the individual chapters.

Fedotov's reconstruction of Kievan Russia is quite at variance with conventional ideas about it: Byzantine elements are proven to have been weaker, and the survival of pre-Christian beliefs stronger than is commonly assumed. They are shown to have centered around the worship of nature. The religious appreciation of nature, says the author, "involves a sense of beauty." Hence the well known enthusiasm of the Russians for the beauty of the ritual and the early blossoming of iconography.

Many differences between the religious mind of Kievan Russia and that of the later periods of Russian history are established. Kievan Russia never accepted the Byzantine pattern of the relations between the State and the Church, a pattern which later prevailed in the Muscovite State. This pattern, commonly called "symphonic," is one of co-equal partnership and deep interpenetration. Instead, in Kievan Russia, the Church was obviously superior to the State, then a loose confederation of states ruled by Rurik's dynasty. The Kievan pattern is explicitly approved by the

author as one best suited to a Christian society.

Moreover, nothing of the religiously supported nationalism so characteristic of later periods could be found in Kievan Russia. There was no contemplative mysticism, and "holy fools" were unknown. The social character of Christian ethics was emphasized, with charity as the main virtue. The dignity of man, culminating in the concept of honor, received much more recognition than in later periods of Russian history; in this respect, as well as in the art of writing historical chronicles, Kievan Russia was not different from Western Europe of the same time. Recognizing this fact, Professor Fedotov rejects, nevertheless, the claim of some contemporary historians that Kievan Russia was one of the most advanced societies of the time. The opinion that she was is, however, advanced by one of the greatest of European historians, Henri Pirenne, who contrasts the blossoming of Kievan Russia with the relative stagnation of Western Europe and explains this by the fact that Kievan Russia had frequent contacts with Byzantium, then the standard bearer of culture, whereas Western Europe was denied this because of Arab and Norman conquests which made communication with Byzantium almost impossible. Perhaps Fedotov's scepticism on this point can be partly explained by insufficient treatment of Russian art (architecture and icons) which is only slightly touched upon in his conclusion. One cannot but regret this, because, without a thorough analysis of Kievan art, full justice cannot be rendered to what the author calls "Russia's golden days of childhood."

Professor Fedotov's book is both

scholarly and exceptionally well written, a rare combination indeed. Everyone interested in the history of Russian culture will be anxiously awaiting the forthcoming volumes of this monumental work.

N. S. TIMASHEFF

Fordham University

MUCHNIC, HELEN. *An Introduction to Russian Literature*. New York, Doubleday, 1947. 272 pp. \$3.00.

A brief review cannot possibly do justice to a book which is anything but an "introduction to" in the undergraduate sense of the word. Free of footnotes and pedantic bibliographical and bibliographical paraphernalia, this remarkable book is a conclusion, rather than an introduction, a summary of searching thought about the spirit of Russian literary expression. The work of this powerful and subtle mind leaves the reader with more than satisfaction. It leaves him with a feeling of joy because here is a stimulating work of true literary criticism. And it is the author's somewhat irreverent, unconventional, synthesizing approach that is so satisfying, even though—or just because—one does not have to agree with all the author's interpretations. For instance, one need not agree that Gogol's realism is subjective, or that Gogol, the romantic, wanted to break with romanticism—be it alone for the reason that such terms as "romanticism," "realism," "subjective" are not always sharply enough defined. Nor does one have to agree that Dostoevsky "spent his whole life proving that Christ would not have joined the socialist movement," a statement deriving from an emphasis on Dostoevsky

the philosopher rather than the psychologist (in the author's words—a man who had depersonalized his own experience and had symbolized the philosophic meaning of what he has lived through). There are some hazy and hasty statements in the book. To bemoan them would be petty since Helen Muchnic has the wisdom to interpret and not to describe, to search underneath the surface and not to preach in a dogmatic fashion. Therefore the reader ought to be grateful for the suspense he is sometimes left in.

Should one want to find fault *à tout prix*, the only thing one may regret is the size of the book. Though one of the author's virtues is conciseness, one could have hoped that given more space, Helen Muchnic would have shown more examples of her art of pure style analysis. In a few lines she is capable of revealing the unique quality of the *byliny* when she points to the Russian rhetorical device of repeating a noun or adjective ("from beyond mountains, mountains lofty, from beyond forests, forests dusky") and stresses the unadorned quality of this noun or adjective, stated in its wholeness, "unbroken into its ingredients"—unlike Anglo-Saxon imagery ("wave-skimmer" for boat, "the whale's path" for sea)—the Russian way indicating greater poetic simplicity and maturity. Then, in one paragraph, analyzing seven lines of Pushkin's "The Bronze Horseman," establishing the relationship between his consonants and vowels, she says more about Pushkin's classical diction than one can find in bulky tomes of Pushkiniana. Or, quoting in her own translation Gogol's famous passage about the Ukrainian night, she swiftly mirrors his prose-poetry in

Pushkin's and manages to stress the significant in both: the formally static and yet emotionally restless quality of the first and the classically subdued dynamism of the latter.

Concerned with the six great of the nineteenth century, Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov, Helen Muchnic lays the foundation for her undertaking by discussing briefly (too briefly) the "beginnings"—the *byliny* and the written tradition preceding Pushkin. She points out clearly the often overlooked significance of literary folk heritage for Pushkin's and Gogol's work and hence for the whole development of Russian realism. An emphasis on native folk tradition is important since according to the author "Russia did not pay tribute to the West, nor did she worship it, nor was she in love with it; she chose the West to be her teacher and went to school to it"—an idea worthy of more thorough development.

Muchnic's book deserves a careful study, not a scanty review. All one can do here is to hint at some of its outstanding qualities, one of which may be called the coherent continuity of contents. It is admirable how the author avoids the mechanical textbook approach of "and-now-that-we-have-exhausted-Pushkin-let's-turn-to-Gogol." Her discussion of Gogol evolves organically out of the one of Pushkin—just as from the beginnings to Chekhov, she finds a valid transition from protagonist to protagonist, illuminating one through the other. For her goal is to demonstrate the evolution of the specifically Russian realism as an attitude to life, as a "voice of men and not of systems," as a "search for the actual

and living"—"an absolute independence of judgment" possible only as an expression of "non-egotism."

Some of the author's fundamental ideas are expressed in following generalizations: Russian writers "stand in awe before the earth, from which they have come, and which they know to be different from themselves; and their art is a passionate attempt to understand it and to ally themselves with it." Therefore, "Russian literature is serious, critical, and, at once, passionate and aloof. Its seriousness derives from the primary conviction that man is the center of things, and that, because he is infinitely important, everything which touches him calls for an honest and undeviating solicitude."

Willingness to think in terms of a synthesis is another of Helen Muchnic's virtues. Distilling the vital out of the work of the great Russians, simultaneously as it were, she is capable of repudiating some of the traditional misconceptions about Russian literature, such as its supposed morbidity, pessimism, and fatalism.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that Helen Muchnic is a master of comparative literature. Her fertile knowledge of Western literature not only lends her book depth and perspective, but helps her place the contribution of the Russians into the vital stream of European cultural development. She gives the non-Russian reader a key for understanding the Russian writers not only by comparing them to each other but by mirroring their work in the achievements of a Chaucer, Shakespeare, Flaubert, Proust, and Mann.

After reading and rereading Helen Muchnic's work, one discovers in-



creasingly more depth in it. To the knowledge of the reviewer, a better book about that which matters in Russian literature has not been written.

VERA SANDOMIRSKY

Wayne University

TROYAT, HENRY. *Firebrand: The Life of Dostoevsky*. New York, Roy Publishers, 1946. 438 pp. \$3.75.

LLOYD, J. A. T. *Fyodor Dostoevsky*. New York, Scribner's, 1947. 324 pp. \$3.50.

LAVRIN, JANKO. *Dostoevsky*. New York, Macmillan, 1947. 161 pp. \$2.00.

In Dostoevsky's troubled world of the insecure, the unbalanced, those unable to come to terms with themselves and the world about them, modern man recognizes himself readily; hence the continued, and even increasing, interest in the great Russian writer and thinker as attested by recent reprints and reissues of his work, as well as biographical studies.

Henry Troyat is a newcomer in the field of Russian literary history and criticism. A Russian-Armenian, he has lived in France since the age of nine and has made a reputation there as a novelist. Troyat's work is devoid of the usual scholarly paraphernalia—footnotes and references to sources; yet he scrupulously follows the known source material—police reports, love letters, memoirs, and letters of contemporaries. Through successive chapters depicting Dostoevsky's unhappy youth, prison and exile, his tortuous love affairs, his illness, his

distressing poverty, and his final acclaim and fame, an extraordinarily contradictory, though human, figure of the great Russian emerges. A man of violent temper, he accepted and bore with great fortitude the dreadful misfortunes that befell him: "this is my cross and I deserve it."

Troyat emphasizes Dostoevsky the religious philosopher, particularly his passionate search for faith. "God tortured me all my life," says a character in *The Possessed*. "This divine torture," Troyat observes, "was Dostoevsky's own." The most interesting parts of Troyat's book depict Dostoevsky's creative process, showing when and under what circumstances the great novels have been conceived and written. The expositions of the works themselves, however, are less stimulating and offer little that is new. Troyat's book is eminently readable; as the author stated in the preface, it was undoubtedly "written in a spirit of absolute sincerity and great love."

Mr. Lloyd is an English scholar who had previously written a life of Dostoevsky (*A Great Russian Realist*). In the present volume Mr. Lloyd draws heavily upon his earlier work. The only new source material which the author apparently uses in this biography is Aimée Dostoevsky's account of her father's life (first published in Germany in 1920 and later translated into English). This account, as most students of Dostoevsky know, is highly unreliable and is not always judiciously used by the author. Mr. Lloyd's book is almost entirely a straight biographical exposition with only cursory discussions of the works themselves. Mr. Lloyd has some interesting and pertinent chap-

ters depicting how an idea germinated in Dostoevsky's mind and eventually developed into a novel. Like most of the recent biographers of the great Russian, Lloyd emphasizes Dostoevsky's singular duality: "no more fantastic, inexplicable mass of contradictions," he observes, "could have contended in a single brain." There is hardly any literary criticism in the book, nor is there anything new in Mr. Lloyd's interpretation of Dostoevsky's character and works.

Professor Lavrin's account is also based on an earlier work, *Dostoevsky and His Creation*, with only here and there some new material added. Mr. Lavrin's little volume offers an excellent biographical summary of Dostoevsky's life and an interesting analysis of his principal works. Again, as Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Lavrin emphasizes the underlying dualism in Dostoevsky's characters which he thinks reflects the novelist's own dualism, seemingly resolved only in Dostoevsky's famous Pushkin memorial speech in which he prophesied that Russia would lead the world in the final realization of the universal brotherhood of man.

A definitive biography of Dostoevsky remains to be written, but that has to wait until new material is discovered. In the meantime, an evaluation of Dostoevsky primarily as an artist and a psychologist would be welcome.

DIMITRI VON MOHRENSCHILDT  
*Dartmouth College*

TKHORZHEVSKY, IVAN. *Russkaya Literatura*. Paris, La Renaissance, 1946, 2 vols.

This is a book done by a discriminating critic and an excellent writer,

who knows and loves his subject. His study, which takes one from the beginnings of Russian literature to the present, is neither a textbook nor an encyclopedia, and, although it can be used profitably by students as a reference guide, especially since it is supplied with a full index and a detailed table of contents, lovers of literature will delight in reading it straight through. For it is an absorbing book, and I hope that some one will undertake to translate it.

Mr. Tkhorzhevsky writes with the kind of insight that can come only of strong and genuine feeling both for literary values and for national qualities. He has no axe to grind. His basic view is that literature is, in essence, a human document which reflects the characters of men as individuals and as exponents of a people's culture. "Only that which life has sharpened," he says, "remains alive and leaves a profound mark on the memory of readers. Back of each remarkable literary production there stands a man, the author; back of every outstanding author—his country, his epoch, a colorful bit of Russian life. That alone is interesting." And although this idea is not novel, and although its clearly formulated announcement at the beginning of the book makes one dread that it may loom as a thesis to be proved, one realizes very soon that the fear is groundless: the hypothesis remains latent, serving as the skeleton of a structure reared not on dogma but on a consistent interpretation and an unmistakably personal experience of art which shape its variegated material into a unit of extraordinary richness. It is the minds of writers and the quality of their work with which Mr. Tkhorzhevsky is concerned, and he has

a concise, witty, and picturesque way of putting things. He says, for example, that Blok was "sensitive and unconsciously prophetic, like a [spiritualistic] medium"; he calls Bryusov an "illegitimate mixture of Tredyakovsky and Baudelaire" who polished his verses zealously, "'orchestrated,' varied them, skilfully poured into them satanism, symbolism, orgiasm," and only "poetry slipped by"; paraphrasing Pushkin's comment on Derzhavin that he was one part gold and three parts lead, he describes Turgenev as three fourths porcelain and speaks of him as having loved people "with great mercy on himself"; he remarks that Vladimir Soloviev was in no sense a leader or a "pillar of truth," as he has been often called, but "the disturbing alarm clock of conscience"; Bunin he characterizes as follows: "It is not so much that [he] dislikes human beings as that he is not much interested in them. He feels himself a solitary, chosen man among them—a golden pheasant in a poor poultry yard,"—and so on throughout the book.

But I should be sorry to give the impression that Mr. Tkhorzhevsky's study is no more than a compilation of scintillating remarks. These, one is tempted to quote because they are so entertaining and so apt, but they are not thrown in for show nor do they obscure the story he tells; and in his pages, one watches the development of Russian literature as one might the unfolding of a living organism, stage by stage, through the processes of its evolution. The dependence of each phase on the preceding one is clearly marked, and so also are the correspondences between parts widely separated in time, but the course of growth is

never reduced to the aridity of "trends" or "movements" and the continuance of tradition and the making of "schools" are shown only in the formative influence of writers' tastes and borrowings. So naturally and convincingly does the history proceed that one finds oneself accepting without protest certain generalized statements which in a more dogmatic work would strike one as highly questionable, realizing only on second thought that they are, after all, subject to debate,—as, for instance, when Mr. Tkhorzhevsky declares that the main currents of all literatures, "realism, romanticism, and symbolism," always correspond in both a nation's and an individual's development to childhood, maturity, and old age. Russian literature, more specifically, he sees as having fallen, after its first supreme flowering in Pushkin, into the two hostile camps of populists and rebels, which Tolstoy and Dostoevsky did much to reconcile; but they were followed at the turn of the century by writers of two other divergent schools, the symbolists and mystics, represented by Vladimir Soloviev, and the impressionistic realists, under the leadership of Chekhov; and with the Revolution of 1917 the break was immeasurably widened, for Soviet writers and the émigrés have been sundered artistically as well as geographically.

Mr. Tkhorzhevsky is himself an émigré, but it is in the U.S.S.R. that he places hope for a glorious revival of Russian literature, because the qualities which seem to him to be developing on native soil—vigor, flexibility, an earthy solidity, and a sense of human as against purely aesthetic values—are those which he most admires and which he sees

as the core of Russian literature at its best. What does it matter that the great novel of the World War has not yet been written? Was not *War and Peace* finished more than fifty years after the struggle with Napoleon? What does it matter that Konstantin Simonov has produced nothing that might be considered real art? He is a precursor, a Zhukovsky foreshadowing another Pushkin who is bound to arrive. And Mr. Tkhorzhevsky, inspired by the feats of heroism performed by

his countrymen during the last war, brings his study to a close in an ardent passage which proclaims his belief that the worst years for Russia are gone, that her people has emerged, "like Ivan in the fairy-tale, rejuvenated from the seething cauldron of the Revolution," and that this rebirth will be expressed in a new art, the possibilities of which are boundless.

HELEN MUCHNIC

*Smith College*

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